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That Dreadful Boy

BY

KATE TANNATT WOODS

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FROM THE BOOKS
IN THE HOMESTEAD OF

Sarah Orne Jewett

AT SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE

BEQUEATHED BY

Theodore Jewett Eastman

A.B. 1901 - M.D. 1905

1931

Sir T. Lyde
With compliments
The Author
May 1885.

o

THAT DREADFUL BOY

An American Novel

BY

MRS. KATE TANNATT WOODS

BOSTON
DEWOLFE, FISKE AND COMPANY
1886

AL 4186.7.4

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C. J. PETERS AND SON, BOSTON.

TO

My Beloved Brother,

GENERAL T. R. TANNATT,

THIS SIMPLE STORY IS DEDICATED
WITH
MANY TENDER MEMORIES
OF
CHILDHOOD'S DAYS.

K. T. W.

SALEM, MASS., MARCH, 1886.

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THAT DREADFUL BOY.

CHAPTER I.

HE ARRIVES.

"It should be Thomas, without any discussion whatever," said portly Mrs. Sylvester.

"But the mother may have a decided preference for some other name," responded Mrs. Winthrop, with the very slightest toss of her aristocratic head.

"It would be quite foolish," urged Mrs. Sylvester. "His father's name was Thomas, so was his grandfather's, and great-grandfathers' for many generations."

"A most excellent reason for securing a new name now," said Mrs. Winthrop, in calm, exasperating tones.

Mrs. Sylvester's face flushed as she replied: "Our family are not fond of new names or new people."

When the conversation had reached this volcanic point, the door opened, and a young man with a handsome, smiling face entered.

"Here are the grandmothers in solemn conclave," said he, cheerily. "I'll venture to say that you have

been discussing the little red-faced, tow-headed chap upstairs, and making plans for his summer's outing; or did you reach his college days?"

"We were talking about his name, my son," said Mrs. Sylvester, haughtily, while Mrs. Winthrop fanned herself, and smiled at her son-in-law.

"Hang the name, mother! That is of small moment compared with my anxiety about Bessie. When I see the little chap's mother in her old place, and hear her laugh ring out as it used to, why, we will talk about the name; just now, I feel like throwing up my cap, and shouting like a schoolboy. The rascal is a week old to-morrow; and his brave little mother is able to smile once more, thank God."

Tom Sylvester was known at the club as a dashing, reckless, happy fellow, not given to deep thought or feeling, and inclined to mock at sentiment; but the arrival of his first-born had suddenly developed unknown qualities. The awful mystery of life and death, the anxiety, suspense, and doubt, which visit so many households, had made Tom so reverently joyous, that he was no more like the old Tom than your last year's photograph is like the one taken in your early girlhood. He was too happy to be tormented with petty jealousies or distracted by old family names.

When he spoke tenderly of his little wife his dignified mother-in-law laid her hand on his arm and thanked him.

"Of course the child must have a name of some

sort," she said, kindly; "but there is no need of haste, and Bessie should be consulted."

"Of course she will be consulted," said Tom, eagerly. "I should like to see myself taking such a step without consulting her. Why, the dear girl is the only one who has any right to say what must be done with that dreadful boy. There he goes! Did you ever hear such a racket for such a youngster? Lungs like a whale. Excuse me; I'll go and see if the nurse wishes for anything in town."

When the young and happy papa left the room, Mrs. Winthrop glanced at her companion; but Mrs. Sylvester rose and followed her son. Both ladies were too well bred to quarrel, and until the present time had been excellent friends.

When Tom Sylvester sent a message to his parents in Louisburg Square that a son was born, he also sent one to his wife's mother; and in due time both ladies drove out to see the new baby in its suburban home.

Both were devoutly thankful that the child was a fine healthy boy; and both went about pale and anxious when the young mother's life was held in the balance.

When danger threatened the family, minor considerations were of little value. But humanity is many-sided; and, no sooner was Mrs. Bessie pronounced very comfortable, than little differences arose.

Mrs. Winthrop felt, and perhaps justly, that her daughter should go with her as soon as able to the mountains, while Mrs. Sylvester claimed mother and

child, inasmuch as her cottage at Newport was ready to receive them, and her son must not lose the first precious hours of his son's life.

Poor Tom was destined to hear many polite discussions before his wife's sweet face could be seen once more at the head of his table. Bessie must not be bothered about them, and he could manage somehow; perhaps they could take in the mountains and sea too. Why not?

Tom managed to pour oil on the waters for several days; but with the increasing heat came increased irritability; and Bessie was tortured despite all Tom's care.

"Newport is no place for you, my love," said Mrs. Winthrop. "Your lungs were never very strong: and our old boarding place at the mountains awaits us."

"Whatever Tom likes best, mamma," urged poor Bessie, who was so filled with a sense of her new responsibility and her own weakness that all places seemed alike.

"Tom will be influenced by his mother, my dear."

"He will care more for my comfort than anything else," said loyal Bessie. "He is very fond of baby now; and he used to detest children, you know."

"I do not wish to urge any claim, my love," said Mrs. Winthrop; "but I have counted on having you with me; and boarding is not like living in one's own house; there you will have absolute freedom from care."

"I know, mamma dear, if we are not with you now, while baby is small and troublesome, you will have quite enough of us by and by. I don't think I care much where we go. It seems so beautiful to think of this poor, little, helpless thing, entirely dependent on us. It is a great and beautiful mystery, is it not, mamma?"

Mrs. Winthrop kissed her daughter, and said no more at that time concerning the summer's outing.

It was Mrs. Sylvester's turn next; and she was not inclined to yield the point without vigorous but dignified battle. Tom was her only son. In the Newport cottage his rooms were kept expressly for him year after year. Everything about the place was virtually under his control; for his father had been unable to attend to business during the last years of his life, as he had wasted his energies in the earlier years in amassing a fortune; wasted them by abuses and overwork.

The case was a trying one; on one hand an only daughter, on the other an only son; the hot July days were coming on, and something must be done. It would never do for Mrs. Bessie to remain in her pretty suburban home, said the doctor, although she earnestly desired it; and it was not pleasant to go too far from poor, dear Tom's office.

Grandpa Winthrop said: "Don't bother the children. Let them do precisely as they wish; if they will come with us to our old quarters at the Crawford House, they shall have the best we can fur-

nish; if Mother Sylvester takes them down to Newport, why, we must be content with hearing from them, and getting a photograph of the boy every week."

Grandpa Winthrop was quite too comfortable to distress himself about anything, although his one daughter Bess was the pride of his heart.

For six long weeks the subject was discussed in all its bearings. Mrs. Sylvester came up frequently from Newport to look after matters, and Mrs. Winthrop waited until the heat overcame her husband before she packed her trunks and flitted to the mountains.

"Bessie dear," said Tom, one evening, as he sat by her hammock on the cool, shaded porch, "I really don't know what to do; those letters must be answered; we never had any trouble before, and now our mothers are nearly ready to draw swords."

"Not quite, Tom; mamma is always very calm and gentle, and your mother is very kind."

"Yes; my beloved maternal is hasty and yours is persistent; it is very absurd, when they have been such warm friends for years. We are all they have, unfortunately; for my part, I think it is quite ridiculous to bring up one child alone, and then —"

"Oh, Tom dear," interrupted Bessie, "it is a dreadful thing to bring up even one child, and I don't see how we can ever manage it; it frightens me."

Just then a loud wail from a strong pair of baby

lungs caused the young mother to leave her hammock hurriedly, nearly upsetting Tom as she did so.

"It doesn't frighten me in the least," said Tom, as he snapped the ashes from his cigar; "he's a boy, and I know exactly how a boy should be brought up."

Tom was talking to himself, for the little mother was already bending over her child.

CHAPTER II.

"L. C."

"If the world revolves on its axis," said Tom, a few evenings later, when his wife had seated herself in her piazza chair for the fourth time; "if it really does revolve on its axis, as I used to say at school, then it is equally true that our entire domestic machinery revolves around that boy. Why, my dear, he has completely upset all previous plans and comfortable arrangements for our mutual happiness. I never knew before what a despotic government meant. The cook must change all her plans for the boy; the bell never rings; we steal up and down stairs like thieves; we whisper like runaway lovers, and go to bed expecting an earthquake. To be honest, I must say that our expectations are usually fulfilled."

"All babies cry, Tom; the doctor says they must, in order to develop their lungs."

"Then I would suggest certain stated times for that exercise, selected by his elders; his present arrangement is unsatisfactory. His concert begins at meal-time, with remarkable exactness, or just when one is getting his first delicious nap."

"Nurse says he is a remarkably good child," said the proud little mother."

"All nurses say that; it is their soothing-syrup for mothers.

"When he is older he will understand."

"Of course he will; system and training are everything. I shall begin with him in due season; you will not see our boy acting like Harry Murdock's. What a rascal he is, and Harry seems so bewildered and uncertain about him; *I* could manage him in an hour's time."

"You would never whip a child, would you, Tom?"

"I might a boy," said Tom, with great dignity. "It does them good sometimes."

Bessie shuddered a little.

"You were never whipped, Tom?"

"Well, no, not in our immediate household, but I had my full share from other boys."

"Tom," said Bessie, with a strange, new light in her eyes, "I don't believe in whipping children like brutes; it is dreadful, cruel, inhuman; and if I thought my poor baby would be treated in that way, I should — should —" Bessie hesitated for some tremendous and ladylike expression — "I should not respect you in the least."

Tom smothered his laugh when he saw Bessie's white, earnest face.

"Don't worry, little girl. There is not enough of him to punish now; and if he ever needs it, why, I will turn him over to you. A great six-foot giant would look well striking such a small bit of humanity. Boys are queer things, any way,— a compound of hatefulness and courage, of tyranny and bravado; why, I

have seen big boys tormenting little delicate ones until I felt compelled to interfere. Your average big boy dotes on tormenting something; if it isn't some poor unfortunate cur or cat, it is one of his own kind; it is the brute in him."

"Well born and well bred children will never do such things," said Bessie. "We must teach our boy to despise evil, and he will choose only the good."

"Poor little Bessie!" said Tom, as his wife again left him for the nursery; "she knows nothing about boys; it will be a tough pull for her when that little chap conducts himself after the manner of his kind. It is well for her that I know more of the world and of boys."

How Tom Sylvester's old club friends would have laughed had they heard this soliloquy; at school he was famous for his pranks, and at home the entire Sylvester family was ruled by Tom. Uncles, aunts and cousins bowed to his will during his childhood, and, as he approached manhood, thought him the dearest fellow in the world, although he went through college in his happy fashion, without much labor or many honors, and was not accounted brilliant even by his parents.

The vexed question of where to go and when, was at last settled by the baby, who perversely took to sneezing and coughing like a veteran hay-fever victim.

The newly shaven lawn or the hay field near the next villa may have had its influence; whatever the cause, the result was sure, for the family physician ordered the entire family to visit the mountains with-

out delay, and in a short time Mrs. Winthrop greeted her daughter, while Grandpa Winthrop captured nurse and the baby.

All this time the child grew and was nameless. Every letter from Newport contained hints about "little Tom," and every reply from the mother was filled with baby's wonderful progress and cunning ways.

Tom invariably called the babe Little Chap, which in due course of time became corrupted into "L. C." whereby the boy was at last known to all the dwellers at Crawford's.

"L. C." was inquired for daily, was made the recipient of silver spoons and mugs, not to mention socks far too small for his plump feet, and bibs of every imaginable pattern.

Tom's mother grew impatient at last concerning the child's name, and wrote her son a long letter, telling him that common usage and family dignity required a different course of conduct, and, as the father was properly christened in the church at Newport, the son should be.

Bessie wisely insisted that Tom should answer this argumentative and lengthy epistle at once, which he did, faithfully bringing the following for her perusal:

CRAWFORD'S, WHITE MTS., JULY.

MY DEARLY BELOVED MOTHER, — Yours of the — inst. duly received and contents noted. The boy gains a pound each week, and does not seem to need a name yet; we won't bother about it. I am not

quite ready to be called "Old Tom" at twenty-four, and, without any disrespect to my honored father's memory, I am a little tired of Thomas, any way. We will wait and let the little chap decide for himself; time enough when he enters school. There's a good bit of humbug about naming children. They ought to be consulted. You remember Kiz Brooke in our class at college, — the poor fellow was fairly cursed with his name of Melchisedec. And there is your own friend, C. C. B., who never will recover from the shock received when he first woke to consciousness and found himself called Christopher Columbus. No, no, my dear mother, you must spare me from his reproaches in the future. He is a wise one now, knows when to cry and how to do it, and lords it over his mother like a Turk. Perhaps you think he is not old enough to know her. There you mistake; two pats of her little hand and two or three cooing words will quiet him when grandpa, grandma, nurse and myself have tried in vain. He is a queer study, and I begin to feel older already. When he knots up his old-young face it sets me to thinking, and I wonder if I have any right to impose a name on him when he cannot help himself. Bessie is quite herself again, and in a week or two we will join you. Meantime, I am now, as always, your affectionate son, TOM.

P. S. I was just hurried up from the office to see the boy. His face was black and blue, like one beaten. I called in Dr. —— here in the house, and he pronounced it a remarkable case — very peculiar, in

fact. I thought so, for I found that the young rascal had been sucking a corner of the worsted crib-cover you made for him, and had then tried to wash his face with it. A very remarkable case indeed!

CHAPTER III.

HE CREATES A SENSATION.

"I DON'T want the boy experimented on," said Tom Sylvester after the small family was comfortably settled in Newport. "You see, mother, the little chap will die if every one tries his or her theories upon him."

"Experience counts for something, my son."

"Yes, mother, I admit it; my experience in getting up nights is developing a bald spot on my head."

"My dear boy, you will never be serious."

"I am serious perpetually now, mother; indeed, I looked in the glass this morning and asked myself if I was the genuine Tom Sylvester of the old days, who used to joke over his dinner and whistle in the early morning. No more whistling now, for the boy is taking his nap; no more jokes, for a tendency to yawn prevents. By the time the L. C. is able to walk, I shall be venerable."

The L. C. continued to thrive; like other babies, he ate and slept, cried and crowed, and selected the most inopportune times for his various performances. His first tooth was made the subject of an entire letter to Mamma Winthrop, and his name, or rather

the want of one, continued to be discussed until the frosts came.

Tom Sylvester went to his wife's room one day just before their return to town, and made a wry face. Being quite accustomed to his ways and manners, she merely asked, "What now?"

"The minister," was the brief response.

"Wants you to attend a funeral?" asked Bessie.

"No. Wish he did; it would be easier."

"Any one in serious trouble?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Tom Sylvester."

"Too deep for utterance?"

"In this case, quite too deep."

"What have you done?"

"Left something undone."

"Then do it at once."

"Ignorance and inexperience prevent."

"Let me counsel you."

"I wish you would."

"Then state the case."

"The awfullest bother I ever had."

"Tom!"

"Honor bright! I mean to throw the entire responsibility on you."

"Do if you dare! Your name is not Adam."

"I wish it were. 'Old Adam' has a familiar sound; I prefer it to 'Old Tom.'"

"Ah, I solve the mystery. Mamma Sylvester has told the dearly beloved pastor that our wee lamb is

nameless, and the dearly beloved tells you that it is your bounden duty to drop the undignified and original L. C. for something worthy of a Christian child."

"Precisely; you are a genius for guessing. Proceed."

"You are satisfied, and insist on delay; then mamma gets vexed, and minister shows you the error of Tom's ways, and mentions your illustrious ancestors, etc., etc., etc."

"Bessie, you are a mind-reader; what next?"

"Then you get cross, and mildly suggest that the boy is your boy, and shall grow to man's estate as L. C. before you will burden him with any name without his mother's consent."

"Were you listening, my dear?"

"I have just returned from driving with Mrs. Mowry, as you know."

"Ah, yes! I remember well! I'm not an angel; and I did let a strong word or two get as far as my teeth, and then, like a coward, I ran. The truth is, the boy must be named, or I shall become a mere skeleton; and this house will be an uncomfortable place of residence."

"We go home next week, Tom."

"True."

"Let us put off the evil day. If I am to have the honor of naming my own baby, let me do it away from the overpowering presence of your father's portrait and your mother's unintentional daily reference thereto."

"It shall be as you wish, O queen!"

All this banter had, as you can see, an undercurrent of seriousness. Tom's objections were sound, as far as they went; and many a man and woman, now compelled to wear a disagreeble name, given them without their knowledge or consent, will gratefully remember his consideration.

"If I had my own way," said Tom, "and was not cowardly enough to follow custom rather than my own ideas of exact justice, Little Chap should name himself."

And this was the very thing he did, as we shall show.

In due course of time the Newport cottage was closed, and the villa at Brookeford blossomed again, while Tom went daily to town attending to business.

Somehow, Tom hardly knew why, business seemed a more important thing of late; the Little Chap must have food, nursing, clothing, education, toys, and books,—and all these Tom would proudly and gladly provide for him.

"He must have a very happy childhood," said Bessie.

"Yes," said Tom, "we will look out for that"; and unconsciously both parents theorized and planned, while the boy sucked his thumb, and performed various feats peculiar to babies.

At the very outset of his career, the child showed a remarkable degree of determination; and when only a few months old, he endeavored to conquer both parents.

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fact. I thought so, for I found that the young rascal had been sucking a corner of the worsted crib-cover you made for him, and had then tried to wash his face with it. A very remarkable case indeed!

hour's chat with Scrimmager, and every important paper relating to the house was placed upon a little table near her son's more pretentious desk.

Tom found her there when he entered. She was dressed as usual, richly but plainly, and in her hand she held a letter from the Zanzibar agent. She dropped it at once on her son's appearance.

"The child?" she said, questioningly.

"The doctor says he will be all right if he pulls through the next two days."

"If," said Mrs. Sylvester, with bowed head.

"Yes," said Tom. "I must hurry out again; any special dispatches?"

"The *Belle Broadhead* is in the bay. Some one must be ready to discharge her. You are not fit, better send Scrimmager."

"Yes, better let him go; she made a quick trip; all well on board?"

Sickness seemed a terrible thing to Tom now.

"All well there; but the purser has lost his two children, you know."

"Poor devil!"

"He knows nothing of it."

"Who will tell him, mother?"

"I suppose I must; Scrimmager says he wouldn't for a year's salary."

"Was it sudden?"

"Yes, two dear little girls, all they had; his wife is in Portland."

"I think you had better tell him, mother," said Tom. "A woman can, you know."

"A woman must, I suppose. Bessie will understand why I am not with you to-day, and take good care of her, Tom; give her the beef tea regularly; you see she is not conscious of hunger or thirst now, she is thinking only of her baby."

"Mother Winthrop is there," said Tom, "and I will try to remember; somehow I cannot think of anything but the Little Chap; and, do you know, Benson lost one just his age, with the same disease. He told me, coming in."

"That is neither here nor there; Benson's wife is a poor, frail thing. Don't give up, Tom."

"Oh, no," said Tom; "if the doctor does not, I won't; but I never knew before how much worry a child could cause."

"We never know until our turn comes. If he lives, he must go through many troubles, my dear; there is the whooping-cough, and the measles, and teething, and all the little ailments, like chicken-pox."

"Goodness, mother! did I endure all those and live?"

"Every one, my dear; so take it easy; babies are babies, and life is life; troubles never come alone."

His mother's calm tone did not deceive Tom; he knew that her external calm usually portended deep anxiety. Was she, too, very anxious about Little Chap, or did the sad task of telling the purser sit heavily upon her? This woman, who could give a sharp retort and become vexed over trifles, was coolness itself when real trouble came.

"I hope our troubles will march in single file, with

a generous space between," said Tom, with a faint attempt at pleasantry.

"They will not."

"Then we must stand firm and take them," said Tom, with a touch of his mother's spirit.

"That is right, Tom; stand firm and together; shall I tell Mr. Strong that you remembered him?"

"Tell him anything you please that will comfort him. He will be in before long, I suppose."

"In a few hours now."

Something in his mother's manner impressed Tom; and although they chatted pleasantly for a few moments longer, no reference to any special anxiety beyond that for her only and beloved grandson was made.

He kissed her as he left her, telling her not to stay down long enough to get tired, and to leave the disagreeables to Scrimmager.

On his way out he remembered her words, "Troubles never come alone," and on reaching home he was surprised to find his mother's coachman there, with one of her carriages, and her favorite horses. As he went up the avenue the man gave him a note in his mother's handwriting.

"How odd!" said Tom; "why, I left her only twenty minutes since."

"All right, Duncan, I will see you again in a moment."

The nurse met him at the door, followed by his mother-in-law.

The child was quiet, seemed to sleep, and moaned

less; would he not prevail on Bessie to take a short drive? The doctor had urged it when he was in.

Bessie would not drive, but she consented to wrap herself in a thick shawl and walk with Tom on the veranda, where she might hear baby's slightest sound.

"Very much obliged to you, Duncan, but my wife will not drive this morning."

"I am not to go back, sir, my mistress said."

"All right, drive round to the stable and put up your pets; they are looking remarkably well. I dare say my mother intends to spend the night here and go into town to-morrow."

"The note explained, sir."

"Sure enough, you gave me a note; well, I must have dropped it with my other mail on the library table. Make yourself at home, Duncan; I will see to it presently."

CHAPTER V.

A MOTHER-IN-LAW.

DUNCAN obeyed orders, while Tom, with his wife leaning on his arm, felt happier than he had done for several days. The cool, clear air was invigorating, and as they walked softly, lest their footfalls might be heard within, Tom reported his conversation with his mother. It comforted Bessie, as it had done her husband; but a great throb of pity smote her heart when he told her of Strong the purser's children.

"Poor fellow!" said she. "And what a weary home-coming after his long voyage! I should like to do something for his poor wife, if one only knew what to do."

"I never thought much about other people's children until now," said Tom; and then he told her of the "ifs" which had bothered him all the morning until he saw his mother.

"Your mother is very brave," said Bessie. "Think of her losing four beautiful children, Tom; no wonder she loves you so much."

"And think of her business talent," said he; "she can discount almost any one I know in her particular line."

"You would never dream, when you see her receiving her guests, that she can tell all about cargoes and invoices, and those dreadful things, which will be a mysterious puzzle to me as long as I live," said Bessie.

"You should see her at the office; always dignified, always the lady, but clear, keen and cautious. My father used to say he owed his fortune to her, for he never made a venture without taking her advice, and never was fortunate until he married her."

The very faintest moan called Bessie away from her husband's side, while he hastened in to look over his mail and answer some letters which had been neglected quite too long. The boy was not worse, — that was the doctor's verdict an hour since; and Tom Sylvester sat down putting the troublesome ifs out of his thoughts. When his letters were disposed of, and he had glanced over the papers, something fluttered down upon the floor; he stooped to pick it up, and found his mother's note.

"I declare I had forgotten it," said Tom; "no wonder the fellows call me 'Sir Careless' at the club."

He opened it and read the contents, not once, but twice, even thrice, and then uttered a characteristic ejaculation, brief and manlike, but forcible.

"By George!" — Bessie frequently reproached him for using "slang" and "commonplaces"; but habit is indeed second nature, and good-natured Tom forgot her reproofs almost as soon as they were uttered.

"I have half a mind to go to town," said he; but

Bessie's low-whispered "Tom" sounded in his ears, and he hurried upstairs to the sick-room.

The child had opened his eyes and looked about. Did it mean improvement, or that wonderful brightness presaging death? The nurse said "improvement," the grandmother doubted; Bessie hoped and clenched her thin hands nervously, while Tom, after one look, rushed out to ask the doctor.

Two hours later that functionary arrived, and confirmed the opinion of nurse and Bessie, whereupon Sir Careless went down the garden walk and hid himself in a vine-embowered summer-house for the space of half an hour. He had not known how much he feared, until hope drove fear away. Suddenly it occurred to him that he was acting selfishly, and poor, tired Bessie must need looking after, so away he went to the house, where he found the nurse seated by the child and his wife on her knees in her own room. She did not hear him when he entered, and he withdrew quietly, feeling himself too earthly for her companionship at that moment.

A few moments later she came out to seek him, and, in all their love-making before marriage, neither of them ever knew such a happy season. It was love sanctified by sorrow.

It was no longer "if" he will live, but life was already throbbing in his veins, and the doctor promised rapid recovery.

Tom drew his pale, tired little wife away from the sick-room, and delighted Mrs. Winthrop by installing her there for a season. In the little library, always

neat and tasteful, thanks to Bessie's deft fingers, they sat down to talk, while the sunlight danced on the floor.

"Better faded carpets than cheeks," said Bessie; so the sunlight crept in to hide in corners and make the house sweet and beautiful for the coming days of storm.

"I have something to show you," said Tom, as he seated his wife on his knee; "something that puzzles me almost as much as Little Chap—"

He picked up his mother's note and gave it to her.

"Why!" exclaimed Bessie, with that prolonged intonation which makes the one word sound like a bell.

"What do you think of it?"

"That she is just as unselfish as she can be, and wants to give us something bright to think of now when we are in trouble," said Bessie, with moist eyes.

"Read it again."

Bessie did so.

"I think something worries her; can it be dear baby's illness?" she said.

"I fear not that alone. She mentioned troubles this morning, and perhaps I had better go to town again. The *Broadhead* is in, you know."

"It is too bad for you to be away, it leaves so much care for her. Couldn't you go in now and be the first to tell her the good news?"

"Duncan telegraphed at once, and I think she will remain down town until she sees poor Strong; meantime, my love, how will you answer?"

"I do not know what to say, Tom dear. I wonder if any one else ever had such a good mother-in-law."

"Something depends on the daughter-in-law, I fancy," said Tom, "and this is your own present."

"Do you suppose she has been losing money, or anything of that sort?"

"Our accounts do not prove it; we have been singularly fortunate, although the loss of the *Vesta* crippled us a little."

"What can the circumstances be?"

"We must find out when we see her. My mother is too just to make her children a present if it was not honestly her own; and she would resign even her personal property rather than wrong any one. You know her theory is, not to wait for death to come before we see those we love comfortably cared for; and when she gave me a deed of this villa, it was her earnest wish to see us settled in our own home through her instrumentality. She insists on my receiving the share of an equal partner now, although, you know, I have been out of college only a short time — far too short since my return from Europe to be of real value to the house. Read her note aloud, please."

Bessie did so.

"My Very Dear Children, — I send you by Duncan the new carriage Sargent made for me two years since; also my chestnut horses. I intended to give them to Bessie on her next birthday; but cir-

cumstances have arisen which lead me to offer them now. I have placed to Bessie's account a sum sufficient to provide for them for several years. If you object to the care, return them by Duncan, and we will forget all about it. I hope our poor lamb will be spared to us many years; if not, he will never know the many trials which fall to the lot of most.

"Your loving mother,

"MARGARET SYLVESTER."

"Tom," said Bessie, "I shall try to thank her; but don't you think such an elegant turnout seems a little pretentious for a young couple just beginning life?"

"Not a bit, if the young couple have some one to pay expenses, and a dreadful boy who will get ill and need airings."

CHAPTER VI.

"OLD TEN-PER-CENT."

TOM did not go to town that night; but Bessie's little note of thanks was sent by Duncan, who declared it was not quite right for him to go away, since David, Tom's man-of-all-work, never would and never could care for the chestnuts properly. Duncan insisted that his orders were "most complete" to stay at Tom's until he heard from his mistress.

"Never mind, old fellow," said Tom, "you know my mother could not get on without you either in Boston or Newport; but you may deliver this note from my wife now, and we will arrange matters later."

Duncan went cityward on one of the early trains; and Tom devoted himself to Bessie and the boy until he was summoned to lunch.

"Now, my dear," he said, as Bessie once more took her place at the head of the table, "now we are once more a family; and just as soon as the L. C. is really on his pins, we must have mother out, and hold a jubilee."

"You seem to have held one ever since the

doctor's favorable announcement," said Mrs. Winthrop; "and I am sure we all feel ten years younger. Your father actually cried for joy last night, Bessie."

"Poor papa! We have all been terribly anxious. I did not know I was tired until this morning."

It was a joyous family once more; the small atom of humanity in the dainty crib upstairs was a monarch indeed; and now that his recovery depended entirely on good care and nursing, and the crisis was indeed past, Bessie consented to obey the nurse and go out daily.

"As soon as I am rested a little," she said, "I am going in to see your mother; and I mean to coax her to come out here for a week. She can leave business to you and Mr. Scrimmager."

"Old Ten-per-cent won't trust me; he has unbounded confidence in her, and very little in your humble servant."

"Why in the world is that poor man afflicted with such a name?" asked Mrs. Winthrop.

"Which?" asked Tom. "If you refer to his family patronymic, it is not especially beautiful, but dates back to the time of Noah, when the Scrimmageours were people of note; if you mean his office name, I can only say it was given him by one of the old captains in my father's employ, when no proposition of any nature would receive Scrimmager's consideration unless he could safely see ten per cent profit."

"Does he know how he is distinguished?" asked Mrs. Winthrop.

"Perfectly. I think he rather enjoys it; but woe be to the youngster who dares address him informally!"

"How long has he been with your house?" asked Mrs. Winthrop.

"Oh, long before I was born. I think he began at the beginning and went out as supercargo once or twice."

"I like him immensely," said Bessie. "He is so refined, with all his peculiarities; and whenever he hands me a chair I feel quite sure that he has been accustomed to good society."

"If handing a chair is evidence of good breeding, our head waiter at the club is a gentleman," said Tom, with a laugh.

"You are happy enough to tease," responded Bessie. "But I will maintain that few people do it gracefully, and Mr. Scrimmager is one of the few."

"I will make a note of it and observe him. We must have the old gentleman out here. His way of saying 'my boy' is as gratifying to my feelings as his manner of handing your chair. Now that Little Chap is on his good behavior, we will open our hearts and doors to all interested friends."

"Yes; do ask him out now, while mamma is here. I want her to know how good he is."

"Old Ten-per-cent" little dreamed of the honor in store for him. He had dined several times at the little villa, and greatly admired young Mrs. Sylvester,

but his shyness prevented him from accepting her kind invitation to run out frequently, and the arrival of the boy upset all previous arrangements; consequently, it was now many months since his shining bald head had been uncovered in Mrs. Bessie's pretty establishment.

After lunch, Tom went to town and down to the office at once; Scrimmager was in East Boston, attending to the discharge of the *Broadhead.* Mrs. Sylvester had not been down.

"There's a telegram for you, sir," said a clerk as Tom took up a file of letters. "It came about an hour since, and I did not send it out, because we expected you in every moment."

Tom opened it and read:

"Gone to Portland. Back to-morrow.

"M. S."

"What on earth has taken the dear woman down there?" queried Tom.

"Did my mother go over to the ship?" asked Tom of the clerk.

"Yes, sir; she went with Mr. Scrimmager, and did not return here."

"I think I will run over myself," said Tom; "my little boy is much better to-day, and I hope to attend to business now."

"I am very glad to hear it, sir; even the old man has lost his head since the child was sick; he has talked of it incessantly."

"Thank you, Dormer. I will go over to East

Boston now, and you will know where to send if I am needed."

Tom hurried away. He found Scrimmager busy enough with "paying off and discharging the cargo," but the old man's tidings concerning Mrs. Sylvester were rather unsatisfactory.

"What took her to Portland?"

"Her heart, rather than her head, Mr. Thomas."

"She went with Mr. Strong, then?"

"Yes; one of those idiotic creatures who love to meddle with everybody's affairs came down here and told Strong that his children were both dead and his wife nearly insane."

"Fool!" muttered Tom.

"Plenty of them left, sir; but a wise woman like your mother finds employment in mending the mischief they make."

"The poor man was badly broken, was he?"

"Upset, Mr. Thomas, quite upset; he turned over everything in the most unbusinesslike manner, and hurried away."

"And my mother went with him, knowing that the long ride alone would be almost too painful for him."

"I only know she went, Mr. Thomas, and I need her advice here this very moment."

"She will be back to-morrow," said Tom.

"Perhaps she will, and perhaps not. Knowing her tendencies as we do, it is safe to conclude that this entire cargo is of less moment to her than some one in trouble. She will never leave the

Strongs until they can be left safely, and it does not matter to her that he was a poor boy your father took out of the street and made a man of. That's the beauty of such a woman, Mr. Thomas. She has a head worthy of any man on Wall Street, and the heart of a child."

"It is a great comfort to know that you appreciate her," said Tom; "but, tell me, do you know anything of any trouble which threatens her? She hinted something of the sort; and if it is business matters, you and I must straighten it out. It is quite time for her to rest and be free from care."

The old man looked up quickly.

"I don't know anything, Mr. Thomas, but a man is free to think."

"And you think —"

"That your mother's secrets are her own, sir."

CHAPTER VII.

AUNT MERCY AT HOME.

Tom turned away baffled. As soon as his mother returned, he would ask her to confide in him, and let him bear her burdens. He was no longer a boy, and she might resign the business to him. He could manage somehow, with Scrimmager and his mother's advice, and it would be better for all.

"Since my boy is all right, I do not care how hard I work," said Tom. "I will keep up the old name and continue the business for him. The professions are crowded; he may not like either science or mechanics, and it will not be a bad thing to step from college into an old established business, as I have done. Scrimmager is so close-mouthed there is no learning anything from him, so I will go at once to my mother."

That evening, when Tom sat by his child's crib and saw the utter weakness of the Little Chap, he laughed quietly over his morning dreams. It seemed almost incredible that such small hands could ever be useful, and such a weak, restless little head full of power.

Mamma and Papa Winthrop had gone home, and

the young couple were once more alone with the nurse and servants.

On his way out, Tom had called at his mother's, where his aunt now reigned supreme.

Margaret would probably stay three or four days, she said; not that she knew, but Margaret was sure to stay everywhere longer than she intended. It was a Quixotic affair at best, but Margaret was Quixotic.

This widowed aunt, who was dependent on Margaret's bounty, never ceased to see shadows, and upbraid her more fortunate sister.

Totally different in temperament, penurious to a fault, and "desponding on principle," as Tom said, she brought neither light nor joy into the home so generously opened to receive her.

Tom marvelled much at his mother's patience, and often felt inclined to chide his aunt for her ill-timed fretfulness. Outwardly, she wore one of those placid faces, always dressed for show, with a most deceitful perpetual smile; inwardly, she possessed an indescribable power of nagging and irritating, which none could know save those constantly with her. She adored Tom, and made him suffer in proportion to her love.

"Why don't you give her a little home somewhere near you?" asked Tom, "and let her croak under her own roof. This chronic indigo atmosphere is tremendously depressing."

"She has no faculty for managing, and would run us deeply in debt despite her penuriousness; besides,

she is the only one left now of our once large family."

So the years wore on, and Aunt Mercy still remained in the family, while, thanks to sister Margaret, her children were well provided for.

The outside world, whose interest in private affairs amounts to guardianship, said that Mrs. Sylvester was extremely fortunate in having her gentle, loving sister with her, for the business required so much time. Some thought Aunt Mercy a housekeeper, whose presence relieved Mrs. Sylvester of all care; others thought Mrs. Sylvester very happily situated, inasmuch as her "establishment was always in order, thanks to her sister."

The outside world, as usual, made a blunder. Beyond a few stitches in her own wardrobe, or a dainty bit of knitting, Aunt Mercy never labored. She was literally "a lily of the field," and said by the servants to be a wealthy widow living with her sister. This impression was confirmed by her manner.

In order to remove all sense of obligation, or any disagreeable financial discussion, Mrs. Sylvester always placed a generous sum of money in her sister's hands on the first of every month. This was received without one expression of gratitude, as were also the dresses made by Mrs. Sylvester's own mantua-maker, who well knew that every one was imperfect in Aunt Mercy's eyes.

What degree of martyrdom Mrs. Sylvester might take, if degrees were given in that school, she never

permitted herself to think; but seasons did occur when it was an immense relief to plunge into business or to drown thought in society.

Tom was quite sure that Aunt Mercy knew nothing of his mother's troubles, if she had any; and yet he must in courtesy remain a few moments.

"Well, auntie," he said, cheerfully, "isn't this a charming autumn?"

"The air is too frosty for comfort; and, as Margaret likes her rooms cool, I am obliged to wrap up, or take a chill."

"Have your own room as hot as you like, auntie. Let me arrange it for you. Doesn't the open fire-place work?"

"It smokes when the wind is in a certain direction, and then the sparks fly. I never dare take a nap, for fear I shall be on fire."

"We can manage that easily," said Tom. "I will order a new fender, or take one from the guest-room. No sparks can trouble you then."

"Oh, no, dear! I dislike the high fenders. You seem to see the fire through a mist. I can wrap up, and lie down in the dressing-room for my nap, or, indeed, go without altogether."

Tom was determined to please, well knowing that any improvement he could make for Aunt Mercy's comfort would meet his mother's approval.

In a few moments the fender from the guest-room was closely fitted, and all possible exposure from sparks prevented. Aunt Mercy's whining was not so readily disposed of.

"Thomas, my dear, I wish you would speak to your mother about getting some of the new preparation of wheat. She is so careless about her food; and my digestion will not permit me to eat many things."

"I will send some up to-day," said good-natured Tom; "or, perhaps, you would prefer to go down in the coupé and order the things you like best."

"Oh, no, child! the air is too sharp, and the coupé hurts my back. As I told your mother, the carriage she sent out to your house is the only one I could take any comfort in."

Here was a trouble Tom could not meet. The carriage was now Mrs. Bessie's, and must remain so.

"I think the phaeton easier than either of the others," said Tom, still determined to be agreeable. "You might drive in with Duncan whenever you like."

"Why, my dear child, you know that Duncan smokes; and sitting beside him would make me positively ill."

"He drives my mother in very often," said Tom.

"I know, my dear; but we are differently constituted. Your mother is not so sensitive.

"Thank Heaven she is not!" muttered Tom, under his breath; but he said aloud: "Well, auntie, here is a beautiful home—horses and servants at your disposal, and my blessed mother as generous as a prince. I think we ought to be comfortable and happy here, don't you?"

"There is no happiness for one who nas seen the trouble I have, Thomas."

Tom, who remembered his late uncle as a heartless, dissipated gambler, neglectful of his family, and at last a victim of *mania à potu*, wondered why a relief from such trouble would not be hailed with delight; but years of experience had proved that such was not the case; and he was now quite familiar with long discourses on the virtues of "my dear husband."

"Women are a queer study," said Tom, as he left his mother's door and hurried home to Bessie; "all but my wife and mother," he added, quite forgetting that each man in the world is likely to make the same remark, and consequently the number of queer women is limited.

"Bessie," said Tom, as he sat by the boy's crib that night, "if our Little Chap ever gets married, I hope he will not be taken in with a set smile and a smooth tongue."

CHAPTER VIII.

A POSITIVE CHARACTER.

THE boy's marriage seemed so very remote to Bessie that Tom's remark caused a smile. Her woman's mind had already accepted as inevitable the list of ailments mentioned by her mother-in-law.

As the days wore away, and the child regained strength, his parents observed that his old wilfulness returned.

"He will do better when he is stronger," said Tom, one morning, when the boy had broken two plates belonging to Bessie's breakfast china.

Tom would have the L. C. at the table, for his antics amused him greatly; and since the short days came, the child was usually in bed when his father returned from town.

"It is quite the thing to keep youngsters shut up in the nursery," said Tom, "the fashionable thing, you know. But the boy belongs to the family and not to the servants; so I shall insist on counting in him whenever we are alone."

It came to be the custom, and the costly dining-chair sent out by Grandpa Winthrop was regularly assigned its place in the æsthetic dining-room.

Every morning the L. C. was brought down in a dainty wrapper, and carefully tucked in where his adoring parents could watch his movements.

His fondness for using his left hand was made the subject of a serious consultation, in which all the family and the family doctor joined, and Tom was sustained in his theory that both sides of the body should be equally developed. Bessie carefully turned the boy in his crib every day, lest his head should develop unduly on one side, according to the theory propounded by the nurse, and in order to give his feet full play he was put in short clothes immediately on his recovery from his distressing illness.

"We will do everything in our power to make him strong and vigorous," said Bessie.

"A perfect type of manhood," said Tom.

Just then Tom addressed himself to his toast and coffee, while the L. C. suddenly seized some plates near, and threw them upon the floor with surprising force, inasmuch as both were shattered, despite the velvety softness of the rug.

The servant gathered up the fragments, and Bessie shook her head at the laughing despoiler, who was in a triumphant mood.

"You should put things out of his reach," said Tom to the nurse, whose duty it was to stand guard over him.

"I thought he could not reach so far," said she, meekly.

"I wonder if he knows it is wrong?" asked Bes-

sie; "I never did believe in putting things away from children."

"Nor I," said Tom.

If the L. C. understood all the remarks made, they were most satisfactory, for he rose at once on the little feet supposed to be too small to sustain him, and reached forward nearly to the table centre, where he seized Tom's gold salt-cellar, which one of his college chums had given him. Before Tom could grasp the little hand, the child sent it with well directed force into his father's plate.

"We must make him mind," said Bessie; "indeed, we must. Why, he is old enough to know better." And she immediately gave utterance to several "Naughty, naughties," which caused the young reprobate to show his toothless gums and smile.

Some further gymnastic exercises on the part of the boy moved his young mother to insist upon his banishment. Then ensued a series of screams and vigorous struggles.

"He will do better when he is stronger," said Tom again, as the nurse bore him away, and for months after Tom excused all shortcomings of the youth with some reference to his illness.

Mrs. Winthrop agreed with Tom that the child was quite too young to endure correction and too nervous to be subjected to discipline. Not so Bessie or Grandma Sylvester; both felt that the boy's future depended on early lessons of self-control, and poor Bessie underwent much discipline herself while correcting her young son.

When Mamma Sylvester returned from her trip to Portland, both children hastened to thank her for her generous gift, but Bessie saw something in her face which had escaped her notice hitherto; a certain sadness, which Tom knew must be caused by the everlasting nagging of an old chronic like Aunt Mercy.

Poor Tom; he could not endure sorrow or sadness in any form, least of all its shadow on his mother's kind face.

It was not trouble at the office, Tom well knew; thus far everything was working well, and even Scrimmager owned that trade was improving in foreign ports, — quite like the old days, in fact.

It delighted Tom to see his mother and Bessie such fast friends, and he often smiled when they argued against him concerning the L. C.

"Now, mother," said Tom, one evening, after the boy had been unusually wilful, "you must admit that he is a lovable little rascal, and one or two little circus performances like this need not discourage one. He is a boy."

"He is indeed a beautiful boy, my son, but he must be properly controlled or you will regret it."

"That is the question," said Tom; "everything hinges on that word properly. I thought I knew all about boys before this little one came, but I confess my ignorance. He staggers me; he breaks out when I expect him to be quiet, and when we are all prepared for an outburst he is a perfect lamb."

"He will make a grand man or an evil one," said his mother. "Environment is everything in his case; he is a positive character, and should be dealt with accordingly."

"Yes, he is very positive," said Tom, with a solemn shake of his head; "there is no doubt about that; but I think Bessie understands him better than myself."

"You are too much alike; the boy is a repetition of yourself."

"Good heavens, mother, do you mean to say that I ever screamed like an Indian and fought like a tiger, as the L. C. does?"

"Precisely; and many times have I gone away from your room in tears because you insisted on contesting some point where I would not sacrifice my sense of right and justice."

Tom looked at his mother's handsome face and her whitening hair for some moments before he spoke. When he did so, his innate sense of justice and honor shone forth.

"Mother," he said, "if I ever caused you one moment's pain, I ask you here and now to forgive me; I know every wish was gratified, or good cause was shown for its being set aside; but I did not dream that I ever caused you either anxiety or needless care."

"Not needless, my dear; I conquered myself before I controlled you; but new ideas rule with each succeeding generation, and I want your boy to have a still better chance. I want you to give him 'sim-

ple living and high thinking,' true and perfect environment for a true and noble soul."

"I'll try, mother; but this tremendous duty is almost too much for my shoulders; it oppresses me; I find myself full of all sorts of foibles and faults, which must not be perpetuated in my boy; and yet how can I prevent it?"

"'Environment is stronger than heredity,' says a recent writer, and the child is fortunate in his surroundings, especially fortunate in his mother."

"And I am especially fortunate in mine," said Tom, as he tenderly drew her toward him. "Confess now, was I such a very, very bad boy?"

"Never bad, Tom; never wickedly cruel, but thoughtless and trying, destructive and wilful."

"And you think the Little Chap will repeat these qualities in this edition of Sylvester?"

"I think so, dear; rightly controlled, he will prove as great a comfort to you as you have ever been to me since your father's loss. I only hope the boy may not resemble his great-grandfather."

"In what respect, mother?"

"In a degree of determination which made him a brave general but an uncomfortable husband, a brilliant executive but a tyrannical father. The world's heroes are too often some poor woman's tormentors."

"If I thought the Little Chap could ever be guilty of rudeness to one of your sex, my dear mother, I would punish him now in advance. But tell me, since we are speaking of the past as well as the present,

have you any trouble weighing on your mind which I can assist in removing?"

"I have experienced some difficulties of late which I must conceal from you for the present. You could not change matters, and I shall overcome them in due time."

"Does Aunt Mercy—?" began Tom.

"Your aunt is trying—extremely trying; but this is quite another matter. I cannot speak of it now. For your boy's sake, I hope to be triumphant."

CHAPTER IX.

PATIENCE VS. THE ROD.

His "boy's sake!"

Tom Sylvester heard these words repeat themselves again and again, without the slightest clew to their real meaning.

For several days the L. C. was quite angelic, and Tom forgot his mother's warning and his great-grandfather's determination. So the days and months wore away, and the boy grew, and in due time was dressed in kilts, and went to a kindergarten. The grandmothers both thought him too young to think of any school, even "a play one," as Mrs. Winthrop said. But Bessie and Tom were firm; in fact, the boy had treated them to a little experience which caused them to suddenly determine on the kindergarten, which, fortunately, was held near by.

The boy had been boiling over with mischief for many days, and, as the third summer of his life rolled away, he seemed ripe for any desperate deed.

"We must find him employment," said Bessie. So Tom brought home an express wagon, a hoe and spade, bats and balls, and every conceivable thing;

but the boy chose his own amusements as he had chosen his times and seasons for tears.

One morning David found all his freshly potted geraniums taken out and replaced, most of them upside down, in one of the garden-beds. On another occasion his mother's beautiful prayer-book, with golden clasps, was treated to several hours' soaking in the bath-tub. How or when he managed to get it there no one could tell.

"We might try shutting him up," said Bessie, one day, after the boy had broken the double windows which the men were preparing to put on — not only broken several large panes of glass, but stood rejoicing in his work.

"Yes; we might try that," said Grandma Sylvester, with a sigh.

"We will remove everything he could destroy," said his mother, with another sigh.

This they did, the nurse unwillingly; for her charge was precious in her eyes.

"Now," said Mrs. Bessie, with a triumphant glance, "the room is nearly empty; he can neither injure himself nor anything in it."

"Better leave a pillow on the lounge, madam," said nurse; "he might get tired and go to sleep."

"Never!" said Grandma Sylvester; "never to sleep, when it requires all the household to get him quieted down for that duty every night."

Yet the pillow was left, and dear, precious baby, as nurse always called him, was told that he must stay there, because he had been naughty.

It was a pretty sight, — even practical Grandma Sylvester thought so, — to see Bessie looking into the round, healthy face, trying in vain to fasten the roguish eyes with her own.

"Pretty mamma, nice mamma," said the boy, patting her cheek; but he always avoided those pitiful eyes.

The room was large, light, and just warm enough. Nothing would have tempted Bessie to frighten her child or give him a dread of darkness; she merely wished to show him that wrong-doing brings punishment upon the doer; and the boy was quite old enough to understand it, she said.

He went into captivity like a prince, and immediately began to examine his surroundings. He neither cried nor seemed surprised. Half an hour later both mother and daughter grew startled by the ominous silence in the room above, and both crept softly to the door. Mrs. Bessie peeped through the keyhole; her darling was evidently happy, — he had taken the pillow from the lounge, and was lying in the centre of the room, with his head upon it, while his eyes were fastened upon the ceiling above.

"He is resting, at all events," said Bessie, as grandma followed her example, and looked through the keyhole.

"Yes, he is resting beautifully, and evidently thinking. I wonder what he is thinking of!"

"Wouldn't it be delightful if we could know," said Mrs. Bessie.

In the carriage-house outside, David and the workmen were speaking in a different manner of Tom Sylvester's heir.

"He's what I call a ripper," said one, as he began to remove the broken glass from the sashes; "before you can think, he is plotting more mischief."

"Folks ought to make their children mind," said his companion; "but these rich ones just bring them up to torment other folks."

"That's not truth ye are spaking," said David; "there's not a poor man's child in the land who gets more care taken of his manners than our little master, and the mistress never fails to correct him if he is rude to one of us. It will not be her fault if he is wild or goes astray."

"Then what ails him? When we was fixing up in the spring he filled our paint pails with dirt, and painted his cat bright red with the roofing paint, while the nurse was only out of sight a few moments. He is quicker than lightning, too."

"Well, natures do be different," said David; "and if the lad is like father or mother, he'll be good enough to make up for his pranks in the childhood time of life."

"It's to be hoped he will," said the painter, "for his pranks are anything but fun now. I consider him a dreadful boy, and, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Sylvester will see trouble with him before he grows to be a man."

"Whip the nonsense out of him, whip it out," said the other workman. "I have two boys of my

own, and I tell you a good smart whipping does them good."

"Were you ever whipped when you were a boy?" asked a sweet voice.

The men looked up to find Mrs. Bessie Sylvester standing near. She had come out to see the full extent of her son's wrong-doing, and had heard the words of the last speaker. Her question required an honest answer.

"Yes, often and often," said the man. "My father used to keep a leather strap on purpose, and sometimes before we boys were up in the morning he would come up and lay it on us for something we had done, or had not done, the day before."

Bessie shuddered, but said: —

"Please excuse me. I do not ask from idle curiosity; I want to know because it is a great and solemn thing to bring up a child, and I would like to understand just how such whippings made you feel, and if you loved your father just as well."

The man struck his fingers quietly with the screw-driver which he held in his hand, and said slowly: —

"Well, marm, I didn't set much by him; me and the boys were fondest of mother."

"Did you feel angry with him when you were whipped?"

"Awful, marm, awful; I've seen my brother ready to kill some one, it used to rouse him up so, but he soon got over it."

"Did you, then, love your father, or ever feel to-

wards him as you want your boy to feel towards you?"

"Well, marm, to be honest, I should say not; though I never thought much about it, except once or twice when I wanted to wollop him, to pay him off for licking me when I didn't need it."

"Are your brothers living now, sir?"

"Well, one is, miss, and he won't help me support the old man, because he's took care of himself since he was ten years old; and the other, he ran away when he was fourteen."

"What made him run away?"

"You see, we were out for a little frolic one night, and we took some melons from the garden and carried them to our room and we threw the seeds out on the shed roof, and that blowed on us, and we caught a strapping; and Dan, he was high-spirited and he wouldn't stand it, so he went to sea."

"Thank you very much, sir, for telling me this. I shall never beat my boy and rouse all his evil passions, and he must love me and his home too well to run away. It is very hard to know just what is right."

CHAPTER X.

THE BOY FEATHERS OUT.

THERE was no further talk among the workmen that morning, for David was employed elsewhere, and the two men were thinking of the lady's words.

When they left work that night, Mrs. Bessie brought out a basket of fruit, which she gave to the man whose memories of early whippings had not yet taught him a better way of governing his own children.

"I thought you might like this for your family," said she; "it is always pleasant to have things brought home to us."

The man tried to thank her, and then added hurriedly, as if ashamed of his weakness:—

"I've thought a sight of what you said this morning, and I guess I will try another tack with my own boys; if coaxing is better for my horse, why, as you say, beating won't help the boys. One of 'em is a lively little chap, and awful aggravating sometimes."

"I dare say," said Bessie; "and every time you are patient with him it will help you both, but it is hard."

Mrs. Bessie sighed again as she returned to the

house. Her last experience with the L. C. was not inspiring.

When Tom came home, early, and she related the particulars, he laughed about it, and insisted on hugging the little rascal at once.

"Please don't, Tom dear; you see I have had *such* a day of it, but your mother has been a great comfort to me."

"I won't do anything you object to, dear," said Tom; "but the last exploit was comical. There is Scrimmager; I insisted on his coming out for the night. Do tell him, Bessie, while we are at dinner; it will divert old Ten-per-cent immensely."

When they were all seated at table, Tom opened the conversation with:—

"Now, Bessie, tell Mr. Scrimmager about your day with the boy; you look tired and worn, poor girl."

"No wonder," said grandma; "she has discussed the moral training of children in various ways, besides trying to keep the boy in order; he is the strangest child I ever saw."

"In the first place, while he was taking his bath, he caught the rug from the lounge and put it in his tub."

"That was before I left," said Tom; "and the rug is an elegant affair I brought from Turkey. You see we haven't put him into the bath-room yet, and his exploits have been confined to the nursery."

"Then he behaved beautifully at breakfast," said Bessie.

"True, so he did," said Tom, "and we were all delighted."

"After breakfast the workmen came, and Susan wrapped him up and took him out to see them put on the double windows; while she ran in for a duster, the boy broke three large panes of glass, and fairly screamed with delight, when he heard the noise."

"Little savage!" said Tom.

"What did you do with him?" asked Mr. Scrimmager, gravely.

"I showed him what he had done, explained it all, and left him looking penitent."

"Looking indeed," said Tom, "the sly rogue."

"In less than five minutes, with the workmen close by, and Susan also, he seized a stick and crash went the fourth glass; then I brought him in and shut him up."

"I do believe I should have tried birch," said Tom.

"I am very glad Bessie was wiser; the boy would have done something still worse if he had been irritated further; he is very like the great-grandfather," said Tom's mother.

"Grandma and I were terribly grieved," said Bessie, "and at last we moved everything from the sewing-room but the lounge and pillows, and shut him in there."

"I hope he was sufficiently tired to drop asleep," said Mr. Scrimmager; "children sometimes exhaust themselves in that way."

"Not a bit of it," said Tom, "as you will hear."

"For some time perfect silence reigned, and when we looked in we saw him on the floor, with the pillow under his head, evidently contemplating something on the ceiling overhead. Grandma and I were so delighted with this that we crept away, leaving Susan in the next room, with orders to call me if anything unusual happened. Soon after, some visitors came and remained a long time; as soon as I was at liberty, I ran up and found all quiet. 'I think he is asleep,' said Susan, 'he has been quiet so long.' 'Have you looked in?' I asked. 'No, marm; he seems to be near the door.' I unlocked the door and shall never forget the sight; he had punctured a hole in the pillow, and removed, one by one, I should judge, the feathers in it; these had lodged in his hair and clung to his woolen garments until he presented a droll appearance, and in this disordered condition sleep had overtaken him. He was literally a feather, with feathers all over his flushed face."

"Did you waken him?" asked Mr. Scrimmager.

"Oh, no; I never think it wise to waken a sleeping child. I threw a light rug over him and left him. In about half an hour a perfect whirlwind of flying feathers assailed us, and there in the doorway of my drawing-room stood the boy, rubbing his half-shut eyes. Susan and I were one hour picking him and restoring things to order."

"How on earth did he puncture the hole?" asked Tom.

"With his teeth," said Bessie; "we found the

marks on the pillow, and a hard task it must have been."

"Sir Resolute," said Tom.

After all the day's pranks the boy was sleeping soundly, and Mr. Scrimmager was invited to see him in his bed.

"He is a very placid looking boy," said the old man; "I am inclined to think he is not vicious."

"No, indeed," said Bessie, warmly; "he is merry and happy through all his mischief, and seems surprised that we do not enjoy it also."

"How would the companionship of other children act upon him?" asked Mr. Scrimmager, as he looked at the handsome face.

"I have thought of that," said Bessie; "they have a dear little kindergarten class at one of our neighbors', and the teacher is a young lady of great refinement."

"He is too young," said Tom.

"Not for kindergarten," said Mr. Scrimmager. "I am pretty old-fashioned in my ideas, but I must insist that Froebel builded better than he knew; only yesterday I heard a young man say that his best school was the kindergarten, at three years of age."

"Baby was three last June," said Bessie.

"He is very large for a boy of three and a half years," said Mr. Scrimmager.

"And very mischievous and daring, too," said Tom. "I found him exploring the inmost recesses of our coal-bin not long since."

So the matter of the L. C.'s training would hence-

forth be divided between the pretty teacher of the kindergarten and the boy's parents, thanks to the wise suggestion of "Old Ten-per-cent."

Another difficulty now arose; a difficulty unforeseen by Tom until his mother suggested it.

"My dear children," she said, "every child at the kindergarten has a name; surely, you would not let him be called 'Baby Sylvester!"

"Never!" said Bessie, "when he is so manly."

Tom laughed.

"It is a little awkward, isn't it? And he could not be put on the register as L. C. I had set my heart on letting the boy name himself."

Mrs. Sylvester shrugged her shoulders. Mr. Scrimmager smiled.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BOY NAMES HIMSELF.

THE next morning, before the family were astir, the boy had coaxed the unwilling Susan down stairs into the breakfast-room, where good Mr. Scrimmager was already seated after his usual brisk walk. He had examined Tom's green-house, had chatted with David, and was now trying to read an article in the *Century*, which lay upon a side table.

Bessie always kept a few books at hand, in order to get a thought of others to live upon, she said, while one waited.

When the boy entered, fresh and rosy, with a whip in one hand and a kitten under one arm, Mr. Scrimmager put the *Century* on the table and lifted the problem of the century in his arms. They were excellent friends. The boy took unheard-of liberties with the old gentleman, and the old man forgot his reserve with the boy.

"Now, my lad," said Mr. Scrimmager, "if you should go to school with other boys, and all the boys had names, you would not care to be called 'Baby,' would you?"

"I know a skool," said the child, who, thanks to

his mother, spoke quite distinctly. "Claude goes, and Robbie, over there in that house, and I am going, too, some time."

"And when you go and the lady asks you what your name is, what will you say?"

To the amazement of his interlocutor and Susan, the boy answered promptly:

"I should say Dick."

"Why Dick?"

"That's the name I like."

"But your father's name is Tom."

"Mine isn't," said the boy, stoutly.

"Did you ever know any one called Dick?"

"Yes; he played with me last summer."

"His name was Richard," said Susan, "little Richard Sewell; and they were great friends at the Crawford House."

"I won't be called Richard," said the boy, stumbling a little over the name; "I am Dick—just Dick."

"Not if mamma dislikes it?"

The boy looked sober.

"Mamma is very gentle and good to you, my little man, and you must think of her."

Just then Bessie entered; before she could greet her guest or child, the latter burst out with:

"Mamma, oh, mamma, I'm going to skool with Claude and Robbie, and my name is Dick."

Bessie was amazed. Suddenly it occurred to her that her husband's faithful friend had been trying to settle for them the momentous question of a name.

"That's my name now, mamma, and I isn't Baby no more, for never."

Bessie laughed.

"We must hear what papa has to say about it."

"No. Skim and me knows, and he said if you liked it."

"Skim" was the boy's own abbreviation for the venerable guest's name.

When Tom heard the history of the name, he grew quite hilarious.

"It is the best thing I have heard in years," he said; "the boy has taken the matter into his own hands, and really named himself. Unless you seriously object, my love, Dick it shall be."

Bessie did not object. It had a manly, honest ring to it, and Richard could be held in reserve for manhood's days.

Now, it so chanced that good Mrs. Sylvester was a captive in her room that morning with a severe headache; consequently she knew nothing of the new name until Bessie's return from the kindergarten class, where the boy was duly entered as Dick Sylvester.

When Bessie repeated the child's conversation with Mr. Scrimmager and the result, Mrs. Sylvester covered her face with her hands and remained silent for a long time.

"Poor mamma," said Bessie, tenderly, "I should not have repeated this nonsense to you when your head is throbbing; do forgive me, and let me bathe it for you."

"It was not that, my dear, not that; I was thinking."

"Could I do anything for you?" asked Bessie.

"You are always doing, my dear; it rests me to be here with you, and it soothes me to feel that some one cares, that some one likes to care. I have been doing for others so long, always thinking for them, planning for them, and earning for them, that it rests me to drift in here, and find you and Tom thinking about my room and consulting my tastes and wishes."

"Dear mamma, we are glad to; it makes us very happy. But you always seem so strong, — so self-reliant and contented, — you seldom give us an opportunity to study your wishes; and you have borne such a heavy burden all these years, mamma."

"Every woman has her woman's tendencies and need of sheltering love, Bessie. Some find it among their own sex, some marry, others live in and for their children. I question if any woman engaged in business, or hampered with many cares, ever lost her woman's need of love and care, her hungering for kindness and tenderness."

"She would not be womanly if she did," said Bessie, as she tenderly stroked the fast silvering hair.

"I think, Tom," said Bessie that night, "that we have done wisely in putting our boy under Miss Greenough's care; she has a perfect genius for managing irrepressibles. But I question if we have acted as wisely concerning his name."

"I like it very much," said Tom; "and this very day deposited some money in the name of Richard Sylvester. What objection have you, my dear?"

"Your mother has not spoken a word concerning it; and when I told her, she covered her face with her hands, and remained silent for a long time."

"Some recollection of her girlhood, I presume," said Tom. "You know my lady mother was a great belle, and considered very beautiful. If I mistake not, she was once betrothed to an army officer, who was killed in Mexico; and my father was his friend. Aunt Mercy chattered about something of the kind to me when I was a boy. If the name is too painfully suggestive, we will avoid using it in her presence as much as possible; but Dick it must be henceforth."

Mrs. Sylvester was still in her room, whither Tom went at once after his conversation with his wife. His cheery good evening brought new color to her cheeks; and all the gentleness of Tom's nature was aroused when he saw how much she had been suffering.

"Too bad," said he, as he took her feverish hand in his; "we must do something more for these headaches; they come quite too often. She must give up business to her good-for-nothing big boy and rest; can't she?"

"I think she must soon, dear Tom."

"That's right; and go abroad for a rest — no, that won't do either; we cannot spare you. Shall I run around to the doctor's and get something for you?"

"No, dear, a little rest will restore me. The dear child behaved well at kindergarten, Bessie tells me."

"Quite a man, mother; and gave his new name with great fervor, considering its recent adoption. You do not object to it, do you, mater dear?"

"No," she replied, slowly. "It recalled some unpleasant memories at first; but one cannot afford to be childish, when one is getting beyond forty."

"If you have any serious objections, mother, it is not too late to correct the evil now," said Tom, although the name was already dear to him, and had been written more than once during the day at the office.

"No serious objection whatever, my love; only a woman's fancy."

CHAPTER XII.

MISCHIEF.

For several days all went well. Miss Greenough reported favorably; indeed, she said young Dick was "a perfect gentleman," and amazed them all with his original ideas.

"After all," said Bessie, "I have been needlessly anxious; his little pranks will do to laugh over a few years hence."

Before sunset Bessie remembered her words.

Tom had fitted up a playroom and workroom for the boy in one corner of the carriage-house, and little by little the indulgent father gathered various tools and toys calculated to amuse and instruct his son.

Mr. Scrimmager smiled when he saw the collection; it was remarkable, indeed, for such a mere child.

"Never mind," said Tom, "he needs employment, and I think it is injurious to keep perpetually saying to the child, 'Make less noise,' or, 'Don't do this or that in this room.' My boy"—Tom was fond of saying "my boy"—"can do precisely as he pleases; there is nothing to injure, and the noise will not wear out his mother's nerves."

That afternoon Bessie saw her son and his schoolmates, Claude and Robbie, safely within the playroom; they were anxious to build boats, and David was at hand to assist them, so the anxious mamma furnished cloth for sails and pennons, and then went to town to do a few trifling errands and come out with Tom.

Mamma Sylvester had returned to her own home, and Mrs. Winthrop and her husband were now trying their first winter in Florida.

Since Dick's newly acquired honors and reputation as a "perfect gentleman," Susan was not on guard perpetually; indeed, Tom fancied that it detracted from a boy's manliness and self-reliance to have some one perpetually following him about. Susan was therefore requested to keep a general lookout, and leave the child more with companions of his own age.

Taking advantage of these instructions, Susan determined to make a little visit to the maids in Robbie's home while her mistress was out, although the last words of her mistress were "to sit where she could see the playroom door, and watch the children lest they should venture out without their wraps."

The mind of the average domestic is a mystery yet unsolved. Although Susan was especially favored, was well aware that her position was desirable, her employers most kind, and permission readily given to visit her friends, the desire to do a forbidden thing overcame all sense of honor and trust; consequently, her mistress had scarcely left the long avenue, on her way to the cars, before Susan's gay

bonnet, was donned, and Susan's self was trotting away to gossip with her neighbors.

A man equally careless of a trust would be severely dealt with; a woman is forgiven and forgiven seventy and seven times, notwithstanding the old hackneyed saying that "women are hard upon women."

No male employé would presume as female domestics are continually doing; and no masculine employer, however gentle, would tolerate the cool impertinence, the eye-service, and direct disobedience, of so-called "female help."

Susan, although better than most of her class, went on her way triumphant, while the mistress who trusted her sped toward the city.

For a time all went well; the boats progressed rapidly, and David devoted his best energies to them until it was time to care for his horses and fires.

In town, Mrs. Bessie had completed her round of small duties, and then found Tom at the office.

"How did you leave them at home?" asked he, as soon as she appeared.

"All well and happy," she answered.

"Good. Will you stay in town and take tea at mother's? She was anxious to have us."

"I did not tell Susan, and you know I always like to see the boy in bed myself."

"Nonsense! don't wear yourself out; Susan can manage without you, and it will be a good thing for the boy."

Bessie deliberated and consented, first stipulating that they should leave immediately after tea.

Tom sent a message to David by Claude's father, whose office was close at hand, and Susan was directed by note, written on Tom's office desk, to put dear little Dick to bed at the usual hour, to be sure to hear his prayers, and leave the ventilator open in his room.

Note and message were delivered in due time, as the fond parents knew they would be, and in a short time Tom and his wife were engaged in lively conversation with Professor Graham, who was the guest of Mrs. Sylvester.

At an early hour they hurried away to their train and saw afar off the lights of their own home. Susan met them at the door with a frightened face.

"Dick is well, is he not?" asked Bessie.

"He is asleep now," was the answer.

Bessie hurried to the nursery.

"Tom! Oh, Tom!" she exclaimed.

Tom was hanging his coat in the hall when he heard the cry of alarm, and ran up, three steps at a time.

"Good heavens! what a fright!" said he.

"How did this happen, Susan?"

Susan was seated in a chair, sobbing hysterically.

"I don't know, sir, not a bit, however it happened; and David won't speak to me."

"Where is David?"

"Below with cook, sir."

Tom went down stairs, three steps at a time.

David and the cook were in the kitchen, both presenting very solemn faces.

"I want to know what has been going on in my absence?" he said, sternly.

David rose and stood before his master respectfully. Cook twirled the corner of her apron about her fingers and looked angry. Neither spoke.

"David," said Tom, "I have always trusted you fully. I want to hear your account of this matter."

"It would ill become me to complain of my young master," said he, "when those who should be looking after him are not doing the work they are paid for, not to mention fine presents and the like."

"Where was Susan this afternoon?"

"That she must tell her own self, sir, since she was not at her duty."

"Can you tell me, cook?"

"Indade, sir, she was out of the house without a word as soon as the missus turned her back, and, not knowing where she was, I couldn't say, sir; if it's guessin' ye want, I could guess a bit for ye."

"I want the simple, honest truth," said Tom, with rising color on his cheeks.

"I can only say my surmises, sir; but the last seen of her she was takin' her way straight to Mr. Bronson's, and I suppose she was visiting a bit with the nursemaid there."

"What time did she return?"

"In season for the little master's five o'clock tea, sir, which he didn't taste, bless him."

"And where were you, David?"

"Well, ye see, sir, I made their boats for the three of them, — not illegant ones but quite good enough to plaze them a bit; and thin I let them sail them in the tank a bit — afther I had warmed the water, fearin' the little master might take cold."

"And then?" asked Tom, impatiently.

"And then I went up to my room to get the new poker I had been making to use in the green-house, and I heard them coming after me; so I shut the door to a bit, not caring to have Master Robbie, who is over curious, be pryin' over my things, and then I heard one of them say, 'Let's lock David in, and play he was a bad boy,' and they did it, sir, for I was careless leaving my key outside, and there was no way down, sir, owing to the windys bein' high and my legs stiff with roomatism. I pounded and struggled a good bit, sir, for I heard the lads in the harness-room, and my green-house fires needed fixin' for the night; and I was a good bit worried, sir."

"How did you get out at last?" asked Tom.

"It was cook, in her wisdom, that found a key to fit the lock; and it was well I got out as I did, sir, for the little master's sake."

Tom groaned as he thought of his boy upstairs.

CHAPTER XIII.

CATCHING UP TO PAPA.

"WHAT shall we do?" said Bessie, as Tom returned and related the result of his interview with old David.

"Let the boy sleep, and do what we can in the morning. It would be cruel to waken him."

Susan went to her room sobbing. Her neglect of duty was the cause of all this trouble, and Tom did not hesitate to state this in plain terms; as for Bessie, she could only look in dismay at her once beautiful boy.

As soon as it was light the next morning, old David was at work, trying, as he said, to get "righted up so to be doing the errands for master."

Tom, manlike, had slept soundly, but Bessie had not closed her eyes; it was impossible, with that dreadful face ever before her.

For once Tom did not laugh. The way of escape was not plain as yet; and Tom's good-natured laugh was never given at the expense of another's feelings.

The disfigured child was taken into his mother's arms and duly examined.

"Will it ever come off, Tom?" asked poor Bessie, as she tried in vain to find a kissable place on the little plump face.

"I don't know," said Tom. "Corbett will be here soon, and we will see what he says."

Tom's faith in Dr. Corbett since the boy's recovery from that nearly fatal illness was unbounded.

"Better send for your barber, too," said poor Bessie, with full eyes; "every bit of his beautiful hair must go."

"Yes," said Tom; "but it won't matter so much, as he is a boy."

"A girl never would do such terrible things," said Bessie.

After breakfast, while they were waiting for Dr. Corbett to arrive, Tom and Bessie sat down and questioned the boy. Tom's inclination to laugh at the droll replies induced Bessie to constitute herself sole examiner.

"How did you happen to lock poor David in his room, my dear. It was very wrong."

"Oh, no, it wasn't, mamma!" responded the mutilated L. C., eagerly; "oh, no! you see, you shut me up when I was cross; and David was cross 'cause Robbie spattered his clean harness—awfully cross!"

"But David is an old man, my dear, and you are a little boy; now, little boys never punish old men."

"Why not?"

Tom coughed, and Bessie hesitated.

"You are not wise enough; and David was kind enough to make boats for you."

"He wouldn't make a dory for Claude when he asked him. Claude wanted two boats."

"When he asked you to let him out, why did you not do so?"

"He wouldn't say, 'I'll be good now'; and you make me."

Tom coughed again, and Bessie shook her head at him.

"What did David say?"

"He said, 'Oonlock the door, ye young rakscals, or I'll break yer bones.'"

The perfect imitation of old David's tone, and even accent, was too much for Tom, and he beat a hasty retreat to his dressing-room, where he could hear without being seen.

Bessie was somewhat surprised at this specimen of mimicry, but, mother-like, maintained her dignity; before she could frame another question, her son burst out with: —

"Course we couldn't 'low him to come out, after such wicked talk."

"What did you do then?"

"Oh, we played some."

"How did you get this dreadful stuff all over your face and hair?"

"Claude and Robbie an' me did it; I'm a chief."

"A chief?"

"Yes, an Injun chief; Robbie's got a picture of one, and he's all painted up; and they said I was the chief, and they helped me paint up like him. Do I look like an Injun, mamma?"

"Like something very, very ugly. Where did you get this black which you have put on your hair and face?"

"Out of David's kettle. He has lots of it; he won't care."

"But, my darling, I care. This is a preparation of tar which David puts on his trees to keep the worms from eating them up."

"Oh, good!" said Dick; "now they won't eat me when I am dead; and Claude says they eat everybody."

Tom chuckled.

"If he will leave me to discipline the child alone," said Bessie to herself, "he might at least overcome his risibles."

"Dick dear," she said, quite sternly, "look at mamma. You have been very, very naughty; and this dirty tar will not leave any of your beautiful hair; when we get it off your face, it will hurt very much. Now, I want you to look in the glass, and see how very ugly you are; there is hardly a spot for mamma to kiss."

"Do they kiss Injun chiefs?"

How absurd Tom was! Why did he chuckle audibly then, and thus give the boy a faint idea that there was something very funny about it all?

Dick heard it, he was so quick to hear and see.

"Come here, papa," he said; "come here, and tell me if Injuns ever have old white hair, 'cause Claude said it must be black."

Dick pulled vigorously at the ends of his long curls,

and seemed to despise them for their soft flaxiness.

"I don't know all there is to know about Indians," said Tom; "and as you are something better than a poor ignorant savage, I want you to have hair like a white man."

"Short, like yours, papa?"

Tom was caught, and he knew it.

"Mine was long when I was a youngster like you," said Tom.

He held the boy up to the mirror, and endeavored to impress him with a sense of his ugliness.

"There, Dick," said he, "you are quite disgusting, and I don't know what we are to do with you. When Dr. Corbett comes he will order something."

"All right," said Dick, in the calmest manner.

Like his father, his faith in Dr. Corbett was unbounded.

When the doctor arrived, he burst into laughter, while his patient stood before him, grinning with delight.

"Dick, you rascal, you deserve a good dose of strap. Did ever a handsome youngster succeed better in making himself hideous?"

The doctor laughed again, while Bessie grew sober.

Dick drew closer to the doctor and asked: "Is strap as good as 'lixir'?"

A certain medicine which the doctor chose to call elixir was wonderfully agreeable to the young man. This query caused the doctor to laugh again.

"I wish you would tell us what to do," said Bessie;

"it was so late last night we could do nothing, and my husband would not let me waken him."

"Had time to season," said the doctor. "Well, Little Chap, you must lose your flaxen tresses."

"Then I'll be a man, like papa," said Dick.

"Oh, Dick dear, what will your grandmas say? they are so fond of those long, fleecy curls," said Bessie.

"They can have 'em all when they are cut off," said Dick, the imperturbable.

Dr. Corbett called for a plate of lard, and was soon engaged in removing the tar with which the child's face was besmeared. In several places the skin came with it, despite all his care, but Dick neither cried nor complained.

"G-r-i-t," spelled the doctor, with a glance at Tom.

"That spells grit," said Dick; "I know, 'cause Robbie's uncle calls him that."

Tom groaned. In order to remove the thick, sticky substance from the head and neck, the long locks must be removed. One by one the matted tangles were cut off, and at last the boy stood shorn before them, so changed that Bessie covered her face with her hands, and Tom muttered something naughty, which sounded like "thunder!"

"Now, Dick, look at yourself," said the doctor, as he led the boy to the mirror.

The boy gave one glance, and calmly said:—

"I'll soon catch up to papa."

CHAPTER XIV.

A SOCIAL PROBLEM.

"I GIVE it up," said Tom, when Dr. Corbett inquired for the boy on the following day, and asked if he had a realizing sense of his scalping.

"He is a puzzle; he cried yesterday over a kitten, because its paw was injured, and never moved a muscle when his mother dressed his sore face and neck."

"You have your hands full, Sylvester," said the doctor; "the boy is a study."

"Yes," said Tom; "as I remarked before, I give it up; he is too deep a study for me, and I find myself looking earnestly at every boy of sixteen, wondering how his parents ever managed to get him so far on the journey of life."

"You know my wife's theory about boys, do you not?"

"No, if there is any other theory to be made known, let me have it," said Tom. "I thought my neighbors and friends had exhausted them."

"Mrs. Corbett is rather practical, you know, and had some knowledge of boys, being only one sister with four brothers. She was fond of saying that her only resource with one of our sex during boy-

hood would be to 'put him in a hogshead and feed him through the bung-hole,' the only safe and competent course for his immediate relatives."

Tom laughed merrily.

"That would be environment, indeed," said he.

"Yes," said the doctor; "but the theory and practice are widely different, as usual; our three boys torment her hourly, and the world does not hold a more devoted mother."

"But tell me, doctor, did you ever have such experiences with either of yours as we are undergoing with this eruptive edition of my family?"

"To be honest, sir, the Little Chap is original and amusing; ours are all entirely unlike, all wide awake and full of sport, in scrapes and out of scrapes, but never quite so startling as Little Chap."

The doctor seldom adopted the new name.

When the grandmothers saw the mutilated darling, there was great tribulation.

In many places the tender skin had been removed with the tar, and the once smooth and pretty face presented a very scaly appearance.

Tom said the boy looked like a walking advertisement of some patent medicine.

Bessie groaned with the grandmothers. The entire household mourned a lost opportunity: the boy's picture should have been taken; it had been arranged for Wednesday, and on Tuesday the "Injun chief" made his appearance. The fine portrait of the boy already under way in Munzig's studio could never be finished from the original.

Lament was universal. Bessie dressed him as usual in his velvet suit, with his broad Vandyke collar, but the face above the garments bore no resemblance to the artistic and beautiful one surrounded by long, light, fleecy curls.

A scratch on the nose injures the face of even a belle, and numerous patches on the round, ruddy visage of young Dick removed every trace of his former beauty. The eyes above still danced and gleamed over the mutilated face, and the shorn scalp showed a well-shaped head, but Bessie ruefully said: "No one wanted to study phrenology."

The catastrophe, for such it really seemed, did not grow less important as the days went by, for the boy's restlessness caused him to irritate the tender places on cheek and chin, and in a week he was not presented to any one, save his immediate family.

Tom tried to console himself with the thought that a still finer crop of hair would appear, and the boy would not grow bald-headed before twenty, as he had done.

Old David was conscience-stricken; he blamed himself for leaving the boys alone, although it was not his duty to care for them, and he further blamed himself for leaving his preparation designed for canker-worms where cantankerous boys could get it.

No one else blamed David, although the old man went about looking anxious; and he was found by Tom busily engaged in making a closet where all

dangerous tar-pots, glue-pots, and sharp-edged tools should be securely locked away.

Susan, after many protestations of sorrow to her mistress, and much weeping over her charge, was conditionally forgiven, and in less than half an hour was earnestly telling cook that she should go and come as she pleased, and it was no fault of hers if the boy would do dreadful things,—a species of bravado well known to housekeepers, and usually fatal to the maid herself, for faithfulness in the humblest position is the only sure road to success.

In Susan's case, the spirit of disobedience grew with nursing, and foolish boasts became actual facts; consequently, just as the child was recovering from his attempted savagery, Susan was discharged for neglect of duty, and was compelled to leave the child, to whom she was sincerely attached despite her wilfulness, and a home where she had been kindly cared for during several years.

Then came numerous changes, trying alike to mother and child. Bessie's great good sense triumphed at last, and she was permitted to keep the boy more directly under her own care.

"I can manage beautifully," she said to Tom and the mothers, when they objected; "the kindergarten is a wonderful helper, and mothers should be the companions of their children."

"The theory is fine," said Tom; "but some one must put the chap to bed when you chance to be in town or dining out."

"Well," said Bessie, gravely, "if the old-fashioned

mother could keep house, and entertain, and look after five or six children, surely I might care for one."

"You must remember, my love," said Mrs. Winthrop, "that the simple manner of living then made it possible. Houses needed less care, and dress was not so elaborate."

"Oh, mamma!" said Bessie, "look at the contents of Grandma Winthrop's oaken chest! — elegant brocades, costly lace, satin shoes, buckles, and high combs, puffs and tuckers, frills and furbelows! No, mamma, this is the age of sense, stout shoes, flannel dresses, loose clothing, and simple food. If I cannot be a society woman and a good mother, I will drop society and be the mother; the boy may reward me for my loss."

Tom silently applauded his wife; but Mrs. Winthrop considered her daughter's views rather Utopian.

"You will not neglect your duty to your husband," said Mrs. Winthrop. "He enjoys going out; and you must not give up your social duties entirely."

"I have been thinking," said Bessie, "that one might do the world better service by bringing up a man or woman in such a manner that society — the real society of living, doing, helping on and up people — would be benefited thereby to a greater extent than in mere social pleasantries and interchanges."

"For instance," said Tom, coming to her rescue,

when he saw that the deep thought was not likely to be quite understood; "you and I can go to a spread at Harvard, and have a very pleasant social time, while our boy's head here at home may be filling up with all manner of mischief, or something calculated to injure him for life. The personal gratification to us will not outweigh the injury done; and, although there is not a man in the country who likes a lunch or dinner better than myself, I question if, after all, we are not Susans where real justice and duty are concerned. I should not like to have Little Chap tell us in the future that our sherbets, and salads, and small talk, sent him to the bad."

"Tom," remonstrated Bessie, "how you do put things!"

There was no time for further argument; for David sent in a telegram just received. Tom read it, and seized his hat.

Bessie picked it up from the floor, where he dropped it in his haste, and read aloud:—

"Come at once to your mother. — M. S."

CHAPTER XV.

A SECRET GRIEF.

"SEND me word at once," said Bessie, as she turned down the collar of Tom's coat; "if your mother is ill, I will join you. I am sure she has been overworking, and did not send the telegram herself."

All the way in, Tom speculated, feared, dreaded. Until recently he had been one with his mother; she asked his advice as if it were of value, told him her plans, and constantly reminded him in various ways that he was her greatest comfort.

"Of course, this must be a confounded way-train," said Tom, "stopping at every wood-pile. We selected Brookford because all the express trains stop there; but it is just my luck to strike one of these drawling affairs."

It was only twelve miles, yet Tom found it as long as his last trip to New York. He seldom fretted; life had been too comfortable for him to know much of the friction which rasps nerves and causes ill temper; but now distance was increased by the heavy weights which anxiety hangs upon it when one is going to a dear one in distress.

At the Boston station Tom sprang into the first hack he saw, and was hurried homeward. Aunt Mercy met him at the door.

"Is my mother ill?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Oh, no, my dear. I sent for you; she has the most dreadful looking man here, and he talks so loud, and your mother is so distressed, although she will not let me into the room, that I sent for you."

The reaction was so great that Tom felt suddenly dizzy. If his mother was not stricken down, if none of the horrible things he dreamed of on the way were true, why, then, he did not care for a whole race of giants. After some moments he managed to say: —

"You had better go to your room, auntie; my mother is in no danger. I will see you again presently."

Aunt Mercy did not take her dismissal kindly, but went away nevertheless. Tom seemed to compel obedience when he spoke.

Tom still sat in the little reception room, wiping the perspiration from his brow, when he heard an angry voice say: —

"Then I will torment you until I die; your protestations are of no use; I don't care a sou for old family tradition."

At this juncture Tom deliberately opened a side door into the library, and entered.

His mother, with a pale, troubled face, exclaimed, "Oh, my boy, my dear son! why did you come?"

"To protect you," said Tom, putting his arm about her. "And now, sir, what is your business here? I overheard you threatening to torment this lady. I want you to understand that she is my mother, and threats are punishable by law."

The man eyed Tom from under his eyebrows, and muttered: —

"Devilishly like him, on my word!"

"Did you address me?" asked Tom.

"No, I merely addressed my memory; it is a trick I have."

"Will you state your business and then leave us?"

"Not hurriedly; haste is unseemly. Besides, I belong here."

"Belong here!" exclaimed Tom.

"It is not courteous to repeat the words of another," said the stranger, with a sneer.

He was a large man, of rather commanding presence, and evidently one whose knowledge of the world was extensive. Certain hard lines about his mouth and eyes betokened dissipation.

"Your presence here," said Tom, who could with difficulty restrain his impulse to kick the stranger out of the house, "your presence here is not desired; now I ask you to state your business here, fully and frankly, as an honest man should, or leave at once."

"Your mother can state it as fully as she pleases."

"Do not ask him, Tom; do not parley with him; he is cold, and cruel, and merciless."

"I will ask him once more to leave us, or explain the cause of his coming here," said Tom.

"And I decline; meantime, I desire to have the money which I require paid me at once."

"How much do you require, and for what purpose?"

"That is my affair. If your mother chooses to remain quiet, I must also; if she bids me speak, I will."

"No, no," said she; "go your way, but do not annoy my son. If you care nothing for the dead, show at least some respect for the living."

The stranger sneered again in the most tantalizing manner.

Tom found it extremely difficult to refrain from seizing him.

"Mother!" said Tom, "confide in me. If this man is attempting any blackmail process or other villany, let me know at once, and expose him."

Mrs. Sylvester was about to speak, when the stranger interrupted her.

"Villany has an unpleasant sound, young man. I respect your chivalrous feeling for your mother. It is rather unusual and effective. You might draw on the stage, but your harsh words do not hurt me. This house and all its belongings are justly mine, and I claim a small portion of my own property. This is not villany; it is justice."

"Mother, answer me one question," said Tom. "Answer me now, I beg you. Has the man the slightest possible claim on my father's estate?"

"I fear that he has, my son."

"You are not sure?"

"No; I cannot feel sure."

"Have you, sir, any legal documents to prove your claim?"

"I can produce several interesting papers, if you wish; either of them will satisfy you."

Tom was amazed.

"Sir," said he, "I know nothing of you, not even your name; but I can see that you were once a gentleman, whatever you may now be, and I address the memory of that time, as you claim to do, and ask you to leave this house for the present. If you wish to transact any business of any nature whatever, you will meet us to-morrow at my private office, in the presence of our lawyer."

"Your mother does not wish the matter made public."

"There is no publicity in arranging one's private affairs with his legal counsellor."

The man hesitated. Mrs. Sylvester hid her face in her hands.

"I hate lawyers," said the stranger; "I was one myself, some thirty years since. But I will not refuse to see yours, provided he is a Boston man, and understands anything of the family history of the Sylvesters."

"Very well, sir; at ten o'clock to-morrow, at No. — Devonshire street, I will see you."

"As you wish," replied the stranger, and Tom gladly bowed him out.

"Mother, dear mother," said Tom, "tell me what all this means."

For the first time in all her busy, useful life, Mrs. Sylvester had fainted.

Tom rang the bell for assistance. Aunt Mercy, who was not far away, appeared.

"Call Louise," he said, sternly; "this is no place for a sensitive person."

"Louise," he said, as his mother's maid appeared, "my mother has had some business worries, and she has not been well of late; we must try to nurse her up."

Together they carried her to her own room, and Tom telegraphed home:—

"Not seriously ill; will be out to-morrow."

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR THE BOY'S SAKE.

It was some hours before Mrs. Sylvester was able to speak to her son, who was bending affectionately over her, anxious to catch her first conscious words.

"What can have caused this weakness?" she asked.

"Worry about the boy, perhaps," said Tom, lightly, thinking it wise to avoid all reference to her visitor.

"The child," she said, "the dear child! he must not suffer."

"Oh, no, mother; he is doing well; a rather ugly looking little chap just now, but a very bright one."

Mrs. Sylvester sighed.

"Mother," said Tom, "do you know that you have had three severe headaches within a few weeks, and are generally out of sorts, despite your robust appearance?"

"It is only a little worry, dear,—something I must endure, and you cannot help. It will all come right soon, I trust. I do not care for myself; it is only for you and Bessie and the child."

"Why, you blessed woman, I can take care of all. Look at these broad shoulders and my muscular arms. There is nothing to discourage me, save loss of health, dear."

Mrs. Sylvester put her hand in his.

"Dear child," she said, "what glorious things youth and strength are! what a tonic hope proves!"

"Now, mother," said Tom, "you are mending; now you begin to look and talk like yourself, and I want to exact a promise."

"Well?"

"I want you to go out to Brookford and let Bessie nurse you up for a week or two. Aunt Mercy wears, when the business does not, and why should you be subjected to such torture?"

"We must see him to-morrow."

Tom frowned.

"I can see him with Livingston, and he is sharp enough to penetrate any mystery. Moreover, Livingston is bound by social ties to our family. You may spare yourself pain and annoyance and let me meet this person for you."

"I am not a coward, Tom, although I have been weak to-day; that man shall not wound you with his specious words or misrepresentations; the truth may be a bitter truth, but we will bear it together if exposure is the final result. I have tried, for the first time in my life, to conceal something from you, and I have failed; but believe me, my dear boy, I did so for your sake and the child's."

"I am glad I arrived as I did, mother."

"I was sorry then; I begin to see now that it was wisest and best."

"Aunt Mercy was in great distress and sent me a telegram in your name; she says—"

"Poor Mercy, she was anxious for me, hearing such rude tones; but, my boy, that man was once a gentleman, and your father's trusted friend."

"Do not let us think of him until we must," said Tom. "Let me call Aunt Mercy in, for I banished her hastily, and I never forget that she is your sister, notwithstanding her indigo and acid."

So Aunt Mercy came in and suggested various remedies which she had used for her "poor dear husband," and warned Tom and his mother against admitting strangers, since even the gas men and plumbers might be murderers in disguise.

Tom laughed at her fancies, and gratified her curiosity by telling her that the strange visitor was the friend of an old friend, who intruded upon them.

The next morning Mrs. Sylvester seemed quite like herself, Aunt Mercy said; and Tom tried to think so, although a heaviness about the usually bright eyes distressed him.

As he took her hand to assist her in mounting the office stairs, he found it tremble in his, and once more he urged her to give up the interview and leave the entire matter to Mr. Livingston and himself.

"It is too late now," she said, wearily, "too late. I fear nothing for myself; it is only disgrace for you."

"There can be neither disgrace for me, nor any serious trouble, while my mother and family are with me," said loyal Tom.

Mr. Livingston was already pacing up and down the floor when they entered, and the stranger had not

made his appearance. The trio entered the inner office and locked the door.

Tom, in a few words, stated his limited knowledge of matters and the occurrences of the previous day.

Mr. Livingston turned to Mrs. Sylvester.

"And how does my friend here explain it?"

"She can neither explain nor excuse until the man himself appears. He has harassed and annoyed me for more than two years by letter, but I never saw him until recently."

"Why did you not refer him to me?"

"I hoped to silence him effectually myself if I could find certain papers, but I have failed thus far. I did not wish to distress my son."

"Does he make any charge against your son?"

"Oh, no; oh, no," said Mrs. Sylvester, as a knock was heard.

Tom opened the door, and the stranger entered, bowing with mock politeness to Mrs. Sylvester.

"This is the lawyer, I presume," said he, turning to Mr. Livingston.

"I am a lawyer," said that gentleman, shortly.

"Now, sir," said Tom, "let us hear your story and see the papers you mentioned."

"First let me ask," said the man, with the utmost nonchalance, "if smoking is disagreeable to madam? I always smoke when attending to business."

"You will be compelled to forego the luxury on this occasion," said Mr. Livingston; "it is disagreeable to the lady."

The stranger bowed, and deposited his papers on the table.

Tom drew a chair near his mother's, and took one of her trembling hands in his.

Mr. Livingston pulled a tablet from his pocket and shook his stylographic pen.

"Now, sir," said he, "we are quite ready."

"It is an unpleasant task, believe me," said the man, with a sinister smile.

"Then hasten through it," responded the lawyer, tartly.

"Before I make any personal statement," said the man, "allow me to ask you to peruse this paper." As he spoke, he handed a well worn document to the lawyer.

Mr. Livingston read it eagerly, but not a muscle of his face moved during the reading. His coolness evidently surprised the stranger.

"Now," said the latter, "you may hand that to the young man there, who is ready to devour me, while you read this little sheet."

The lawyer took the second paper from his hand, and passed the first to Tom.

In a few moments a look of horror was seen on the face of the latter, while the former read the second document with an unruffled countenance.

When the reading was concluded, the lawyer turned to the stranger, and said: —

"Well, sir, this is a familiar tale to me — a fair story of the past. How does it affect my client?"

"She can tell you, sir. It places the lady and her

heirs in a most embarrassing position. The marriage is proven beyond a doubt."

"We knew that before we saw you, sir."

"But you did not know that the lady was living until recently."

"I knew when she died," said the lawyer.

"Pardon me, I was on the ground; she did not die."

"What is your name?" asked the lawyer. "It is well to know so wise a man."

"Dick Weaver, at your service, the companion of Mr. Sylvester during his residence at Zanzibar."

CHAPTER XVII.

"SKIM" TAKES OBSERVATIONS.

TOM envied Mr. Livingston his wonderful power of self-control.

When the man announced his name, the lawyer merely said: —

"You accompanied the late Mr. Sylvester when he went to Zanzibar, many years ago?"

"I did, sir."

"You were his trusted friend at that time?"

"We were like brothers."

"When you left him for Bombay, you were entrusted with some interests of his?"

The man was surprised, but replied: —

"Yes."

"I have heard of you before. To-morrow I shall be engaged in court; in fact, during this entire week I shall be too much occupied to do justice to this case. Where can I find you when wanted?"

"I shall not leave Boston. I am boarding in a very humble locality."

"Do you need money?"

"I shall not when I receive my just dues."

"Answer an honest question in an honest manner

if you can. If you require money to make you comfortable until I can examine this case and these papers, I will advance it."

"I cannot leave the papers with you, sir."

"It is important, if you would substantiate your claim."

The stranger quailed under the lawyer's keen glance.

"Understand me fully," said the latter; "this lady is my friend as well as client, and I do not hesitate to say that she will do exact justice, if it reduces her to poverty. Do you understand?"

"I do; poverty and I are old friends; the lady has never been introduced to it, and I dislike to be master of ceremonies in such a case."

Mr. Livingston frowned. The man's manner was even more offensive than his words.

"One week hence you will meet me here in this place, in the presence of this gentleman, and meantime, if you attempt to address this lady or annoy her in any manner, I will cause you to be arrested at once."

The stranger's sneer did not escape the lawyer's notice; and he quickly followed him into the next room, where Tom heard Mr. Livingston's voice uttering a few brief and forcible words.

When the lawyer returned, Tom was still walking the floor, with a white, set face. Mrs. Sylvester's head was bowed upon her hands.

"Don't take it too hard, Tom," he said; "if the rascal's claim is good in one respect, I mistrust him

in another. It is a knockdown, anyway; but, depend upon it, there is a bright side."

Tom could not trust himself to speak. It was Mrs. Sylvester who replied: —

"How can he help it, poor boy; every hope in life blasted, the old name disgraced, and he —"

"Hush! hush!" said Mr. Livingston, as he put his hand upon her shoulders; "you have brooded over this until you are quite morbid. Why, Margaret, we have been old friends from childhood, and I never saw you in the valley of despair before."

"Did I ever have such cause?"

"No, I admit everything; I admit the papers and their apparent genuineness, the man's story, if you will, even in its worst forms; but I will never admit for one moment that my friend Tom here, who is quite like an own child to me, can be disgraced by any transaction in the past."

Tom advanced, and took the lawyer's outstretched hand.

"Why do you all think of me?" he said. "It matters little. I do not care a picayune save for my mother; and for her sake I wish that this sneering rascal was fathoms under the sea he claims to have crossed so recently."

"Oh, Tom, my dear, think of your boy!"

Tom hesitated. Yes, there was the boy, — a Sylvester, — and he must know about it as the years rolled on; he must suffer if all this were true.

Tom's fatherly pride was strong, his family traditions dear to him; and life seemed to be just begin-

ning in such a happy way. What would Bessie say, and how could he ever tell her! How could he explain to Mrs. Winthrop!

Mr. Livingston read his young friend's thoughts.

"Tom," said he, "this matter is in our own hands now; as a lawyer, I assure you that it can be compromised, even if every word is true. The secret can be kept for thirty years more if need be, and then add thirty to that. Why not?"

"Concealment seems like dishonesty," said Tom.

"Not at all. Let me think it over. Somewhere in my memory I have stored away some confidences of the past. Give me time to collect them and investigate this matter fully. Don't give up, and, above all, do not dwell on the matter. I will clear up the mystery, if I am compelled to go to Zanzibar myself. Don't let your mother go home to Aunt Mercy; she will be a blister. Take her home with you; and, if you like, talk it over with Mrs. Bessie. She is a wise little woman, and will give sound advice."

Tom tried to smile. It was the first hard blow he had ever received in his life; and he was partially stunned.

Mrs. Sylvester was the first to rally.

"The written truth, however bitter, would be preferable to the man's insolent manner; and I thank you for sparing me that."

"He will not trouble you again. Let me see; this is Tuesday. Now, Tom, if you should invite me, I might run out to tea, say on Saturday, and we could plan a little as to the future."

"Do come!" said Tom, eagerly; "it will be very kind."

"I will," replied the lawyer. "I want to see how the L. C. prospers since his first great shave. What a little trump he is! Nothing daunts him; nothing surprises him. The boy must study law; it requires some nerve to get on in my profession."

"I have seen that to-day," said Tom.

Mrs. Sylvester roused herself, when she remembered that she must face her clerks in the next room.

As the party passed out, she turned smilingly to Mr. Livingston, saying:—

"Remember, now, you take tea with us on Saturday. Let nothing prevent your coming."

"I shall be there, Deo volente," said the lawyer.

There was nothing unusual in this. Mr. Livingston was not only the legal adviser of the house, but connected by marriage with Mrs. Sylvester's family.

Poor Tom had not yet learned to hide the cancer known as trouble, and more than one saw his white face.

Dormer said to himself:—

"So much for family cares. He was the picture of health before that boy's arrival."

Scrimmager looked up in time to catch Mrs. Sylvester's eye as her words fell on his ear, and his muttered growl only half expressed his feelings.

"This is a fine world, isn't it," he said to himself, "when a woman like that can be stung by a misera-

ble serpent unfit to live! Dick Weaver little dreams that I have a memory."

The old man did not close his eyes that night. He saw constantly before him Tom's white, startled face and the bright, too bright, eyes of the woman he was proud to serve.

"Both thinking of their children," said he; "Mr. Tom of the Little Chap, and she of Mr. Tom. I must go out there very soon. They never mind me, and I can divert them in various ways."

He kept his word, and on the following evening Mrs. Bessie welcomed him with real delight, while the boy ran and danced and screamed like a veritable Indian because "Skim" had come.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TOM'S RESOLVE.

LAWYER LIVINGSTON was by no means idle; even his important cases in court did not prevent him from examining every detail connected with his friend's affairs. His daughters, who were now his housekeepers, grew impatient when they found him sitting up nights to examine old musty papers which a servant was required to bring down from the lawyer's attic.

"I remember it distinctly," he said; "the letter was written on large sheets of paper and sealed with the Sylvester family seal. We talked it over when he came home, and then it was put out of sight and never referred to again, although I seem to remember seeing it since his death."

On Friday evening he was about to despair, when his daughter Lottie came in to remonstrate with him on her way to bed.

"Is it one of those horribly important papers, papa, that you must wear yourself out for?"

"Yes, dear, so important that the happiness and comfort of an entire family depend upon it."

"Dear, dear," said Lottie, "then let me help you."

"Better creep away and get your beauty sleep," said her father.

"No, I will remain until you go. Now, tell me exactly what you are looking for."

"A large, heavy, old-fashioned letter, sealed with wax and addressed to me, care of Bragdon Bentley, attorney."

"So long ago, papa?"

"Yes, so long ago; and the writer little dreamed that I should be sitting here looking for it when he was in his grave."

It was a tedious task; letter after letter was taken up and put down, but the all-important one did not appear.

It was growing very late, and the box of letters was nearly empty; still Mr. Livingston went on with the search.

"I am afraid we must give it up, papa."

"I fear so," he said, "and yet I would give a thousand dollars to find it."

When the last one was taken out, Lottie kissed her father good night and moved away.

For some time the lawyer sat gazing at the box of letters, and pondering on the case in hand; then he rose and went to his room.

As he wound his watch he touched a spring and looked upon the face of his dead wife. In all the days that had come and gone since she left him, he had never slept without gazing into the clear, true eyes, which had been to him light and comfort and joy.

"What would she say if she knew of the trouble threatening Maggie?" he said. "They were like sisters, although only cousins, and Tom and I were lovers together. It was Maggie who made us happy with her inherited wealth; Maggie who planned meetings for us when my darling's father scorned the young student, and Maggie, too, who stood by us at the altar. Well, well, if she knows anything of earth now, she sees the sorrow in store for her faithful friend, and she knows, too, that I will spend my last dollar before Margaret Sylvester and her heirs shall suffer."

The lawyer closed the costly watch and prepared for bed.

He could not sleep, and long before the morning dawned he had resolved to prepare his friends for the worst, although he retained a faint hope that some new developments might arise.

At Brookford, Mrs. Sylvester was also trying to sleep, while Tom and Bessie were eagerly talking over the sad story.

"No wonder my mother has been sad of late; no wonder she has insisted on trivial details in business, and has not seemed her own bright self since baby came," said Tom. "Why, I feel desperate enough to fight at one moment, and crushed beyond all power of moving at another."

"Oh, no, dear," said Bessie, soothingly; "it is such a far away trouble, and every one loses property nowadays. We can retrench and live simply, and keep your mother here with us. Even with all

this true, he cannot rob your mother of her inherited property and her Newport home."

"You forget the disgrace."

"Dear Tom, disgrace is personal. I never did believe in the popular fancy that the wrong-doing of some one belonging to us disgraced us — never! We must live our own lives, be our own true selves, answer for our own misdeeds, although we suffer. When one of our own family or a friend 'goes wrong,' as the saying is, the suffering is neither disgrace nor personal shame, — it is sorrow and pain."

"How many will agree with you, little woman?"

"Thousands," said Bessie, emphatically; "every wife whose husband has defaulted or touched unclean money; every mother whose baby boy has grown into a dissipated, wretched man, notwithstanding her love and prayers and tender teachings; and every man who knows what it is to spend sleepless nights and anxious days because the children he loves are wayward sinners. No, Tom dear; we are untouched by disgraces if we are pure ourselves."

"My dear wife," said Tom, "I never dreamed that you were given to such trains of thought; but, unfortunately, the world at large will not see with your kind eyes."

"The world does see and know. There is not a house without some trouble, not a family that does not sigh over something in the past or present. I never did believe in the skeleton in every household. It is something more than a skeleton; it is a living, pulsating presence, often ghastly, but never ghostly."

Bessie had gone to bed, and was lying with one arm thrown over her head, while Tom sat near by, in a lounging-chair, nervously twirling his watch-chain.

He could not rest, and it was now long past midnight.

As his wife ceased speaking, he leaned forward and stroked her beautiful hair, which was thrown loosely upon the pillow.

"I don't know what to make of you, Bessie," he said. "You seem so much wiser than I; all the way from town I was dreading to tell you, and now that you do know the cruel facts you are trying to comfort me, and seem years wiser than I."

"It is your first trouble, Tom dear."

"Yes," said Tom, "I suppose so; but I thought I knew what trouble was when you and baby were so ill."

"That was anxiety. You see, I knew what trouble was long ago."

"You, dear?"

"Have you forgotten Len?"

No, Tom had not forgotten him; he was Bessie's brother, a gay, bright, handsome fellow, full of life and spirits, and a brilliant scholar. Every one loved Lennox Winthrop, he was such good company; and no one dreamed that the genial young man was letting appetite become master until he was carried home intoxicated night after night.

Poor Bessie, she did indeed know what trouble was; it had given her wisdom beyond her years, and the word disgrace had stung her tender heart

until she learned the lesson she had given her husband.

Len Winthrop went to an early grave, while his sister was yet in school, but years after she could not see his picture with tearless eyes, and her gay, beautiful brother was often in her thoughts as she looked in her own baby's eyes.

"Forgive me, dear," said Tom, kindly. "You can indeed teach me in many ways. In my arrogance and pride I thought I could instruct my boy in the world's ways better than yourself, but his best teacher will be his mother."

"Our united efforts may prove insufficient," said Bessie. "I always tremble when I remember Len, and think of the many temptations surrounding boys; but Infinite Wisdom is a blessed support."

Tom crossed the room and looked at his boy.

The short hair was already coming out in abundant curls, and the round face was peaceful and happy.

Tom bent over and kissed him. The boy smiled, but did not waken.

"Bessie," said Tom, "do you think you could manage the Little Chap if I should go away for a year or two?"

CHAPTER XIX.

"'BOUT FORGIVING."

TOM'S question quite overcame Bessie for a few moments. Separation was something she had never dreamed of.

In all her plans for the future Tom was by her side; and in her girlhood's days she had resolutely declared that nothing would induce her to marry a man who must follow the sea or leave his family.

One of her cousins was the wife of a naval officer, and her wanderings to and fro on the face of the earth, in order to catch a few precious hours with her husband, seemed most pitiful to Bessie. Now in one port for a few hours, now flying like a shuttle between stations, while the children were at boarding school, deprived of all parental care or home life.

Bessie's aversion to such separation grew more intense after baby came. Both parents seemed so important to the child, and one day's absence from home on Tom's part gave him a new sense of his own value.

When he crossed the room and stood looking down upon her, Bessie did not speak.

Tom helped her: —

"You see how it is: the papers look all right; there is some truth in the matter, but how much we cannot guess. Hired agents will half do the work, and I want to know the truth and the whole truth. I can only do it by taking this journey. I have not mentioned it to any one, not even Livingston: but it seems best. I might get back in less time; but, at all events, you would hear regularly, for it would be a million times harder for me than for you."

"Oh, Tom!" said Bessie, with a little gasp.

"You see you would have the boy, and your family, and mother. I should insist on her remaining here, and I should have only my gloomy thoughts and your pictures to look at."

"You might take us with you."

"Not into that climate. I might have gone out before we were married. I did think of it, but Scrimmager did not consider it best, and of course we never dreamed of this."

"Have you consulted Mr. Scrimmager?"

"No; he only surmises that there is trouble. I think it would be well to take him into our confidence, for he was out there for a long time, and he could give me some valuable hints. Livingston may laugh at my suggestion, but it strikes me as the only safe course."

"Meantime?" asked Bessie.

"Meantime, Livingston will take care of this man who has suddenly arisen like a death's-head in our

midst, and you will care for boy, and keep a regular journal of all his sayings and doings for me. If we lose our wealth, —"

Tom hesitated. He had never been without money, had never known what it was to be cramped in any way. How would it seem?

Before he could answer his own mental question, Bessie had recovered herself, and said, courageously: —

"If we lose our wealth, like Timon of Athens, we will think ourselves wealthy in our friends. Don't worry any more, Tom. Mr. Livingston comes on Saturday, and all will be well."

Tom Sylvester began to wonder if any wealth could surpass the treasure he possessed in his loving wife.

Saturday came, and with it Mr. Livingston. He was very bright, joked with Tom, played ball with the boy, told some capital stories of his young days, and quietly whispered to Mrs. Sylvester, Sr., that he would run straight to town, without one word, if she did not put away the anxious look which was making a hole between her eyebrows.

"Don't think of it perpetually, Maggie," he said; "I tell you we will end our days in peace."

"I think of it constantly," she said, in a low tone, "and especially whenever I look at that darling child."

"That darling child will triumph, now mark me! So don't worry, and after tea I will tell you something I have planned."

Mrs. Sylvester exerted herself, and assumed a cheerfulness she did not feel.

After tea the boy was put to bed, and a family council held in the library.

"I sat up all night trying to find a letter," said Mr. Livingston, "which dear old Tom wrote me long ago. It covers the entire ground, in one sense; for it tells us the names of certain parties who can be reached, and will either confirm or deny the statements of this man. If the letter cannot be found —"

"Was it a letter addressed to you from my husband relative to some connection of his while at Zanzibar?"

"Exactly; you know all about it, I think."

"You gave me the letter to destroy some years since, when you gave me the journal which my husband kept for you on first going out."

"So I did! so I did! and you destroyed it, of course? Lottie is right; I am very forgetful."

"I did not destroy it!"

"Well, I am delighted! do produce it at once."

Mrs. Sylvester went to her room, and soon returned with it.

"There," said the lawyer, "that fully corroborates the first portion of the statement. It leaves the rest an open question still."

He gave the letter to Tom, who read it aloud, as directed.

Bessie opened her eyes as he did so; but not a word escaped her. Nothing would be too hard for

her to bear, if Tom and his mother did not suffer too much. The boy could carve his own way.

"The marriage I consider sure," said Mrs. Sylvester. "I have always known it; the rest I consider a fabrication."

"So I do," said Mr. Livingston. "The only trouble is to prove it."

"That can only be done by going there," said Tom.

"True; but who can go?"

"I will," said Tom.

Mr. Livingston sat bolt-upright and stared at him.

His mother said simply, "My dear boy!"

Her boy drew himself up proudly, and repeated it.

"Yes, I will go. My wife agrees with me; and the affairs of our house will bear looking after — that is sufficient for the public. I would not permit my mother to undertake it; and it is my duty."

Mr. Livingston sprang up, and grasped his hand.

"The old stock, Tom, after all! your mother's persistence and patience! Good, Tom! good! it's the very thing I wanted, but did not dare suggest. I thought it would be so hard for Bessie and your mother."

"We will care for each other," said Bessie, bravely; "won't we, mamma?"

Mrs. Sylvester hesitated. The surprise silenced her.

"It is all right," said Tom. "I can find out more in a week than any outside party could in a month, and the trip will be a good thing. Bessie will have

you all; and among you, I think you won't let the boy forget me. If he does not understand it now, he will appreciate it when he is older."

"And thank you, as I do," said Mr. Livingston.

Mrs. Sylvester approached her son and put her hand upon his arm.

"If you go," she said, "count the mental cost. Remember what happens if this is true; remember your boy."

"I can never forget him, mother. You surely do not believe this wretch who tries to assail my father's character!"

"I do not believe it, but I dare not deny it. If your father committed an error, or even a crime, he did so innocently. I trusted him as he trusted me. For his sake we will search every record and follow every clew, if it reduces us to beggary. Better that than a dishonored name; better prove all he says than hold one dollar not justly ours, — even if it makes your boy —"

Suddenly a little white-robed figure appeared in the doorway, and a little voice said: —

"Mamma, perhaps you better come say that prayer 'bout forgiving again, 'cause I pounded Claude to-day when he said I was a coward."

The conference was ended, and Bessie took the boy in her arms, thinking how much they all needed to say the prayer "'bout forgiving," and how many nights Tom would think of the little white-robed figure.

CHAPTER XX.

DICK CAPTURES "SKIM."

WHILE the family at Brookford were making preparations for Tom's departure, his friends at the club were discussing his affairs, with the liberty so generally taken among club men.

"I never saw a fellow so changed in my life," said one; "he used to keep things rattling here, but getting married has utterly spoiled him."

"Any man would be subdued with two mothers-in-law constantly about him."

"He has but one, and she adores Tom," said a sober-looking young man who was holding a paper very near his eyes.

"There you are, Smiley, putting in a good word, as usual," responded the second speaker. "Mrs. Winthrop is one of your extremely proper and polite Boston women. She would drive me mad in a week; I don't think she has the least knowledge of evil, and when she utters the responses at church, in the pew next ours, I always think she regards the things to be delivered from as quite outside of her world, — as far away at least as Hindostan."

"You are either wilfully obtuse or greatly preju-

diced," said Smiley; "you forget Len, who was your classmate and mine. I have seen that woman suffer until I marvelled at her powers of self-control, but I marvel concerning all women, for that matter."

"Fact, Smiley, so you do; there's Tom's pretty wife, for instance. I remember you said at the wedding that she looked more than merely pretty to you — she looked genuinely trustworthy and good; and yet poor Tom is housed up there and made to dance attendance on the Lord knows how many of them, — and all for getting married. The mothers are enough to knock all the spirit out of a fellow, without that dreadful boy of his. I don't believe the chap is ever still five minutes, and Tom is growing old rapidly; therefore, gentlemen, I say beware of matrimony."

The young man called Smiley folded his paper carefully, removed his glasses, and rose to his feet.

"I wish personalities of all kinds could be forever swept from this place," he said; "but human nature is human, and, since you have mentioned our friend Tom's family, I want to say here and now, that I never entered a happier home, never saw a more united family, and, to my thinking, Tom himself is ten times the man he used to be since the advent of his boy. If we could all marry as Tom has married, and live the useful life he is living, perhaps we, too, might find our happiness outside the club so great that the selfish attractions here would not tempt us."

Smiley's little speech, made with real feeling but quietly, as the awkward and nervous fellow twirled

his glasses about, was received with applause by his friends.

"You are a trump, Smiley," said the young man whose sneers concerning matrimony had first opened the discussion, "but you must admit that Tom —"

Before the speaker could give utterance to further comment, Tom Sylvester entered, like a fresh breeze.

"How are you, Smiley? Glad to see you, Gordon; and you, Mendon. Sorry to say good morning and good-by at once, but I am going out to Zanzibar on some business for the house, and may not get in again. Sorry I cannot see you all together once more; but express my regrets, will you, and keep me posted as to the general doings."

"Why don't you send some one, Tom? Why do you leave your family and friends in this fashion?" said Gordon.

"Would if I could. But you know how it is, Gordie; if you want anything half done, send; well done, go yourself."

"Well, let us have a little spread before you leave, and say good-by as a 'colonel' should," said Mendon.

"Wish I could, and thank you for the thought; but I sail to-morrow. Smiley, may I have a word with you? I want to entrust some matters to your care."

Tom and Smiley entered a private room, while Mendon and Gordon began to lament:—

"It is a shame to bury a splendid fellow in a beastly climate like that," said Mendon.

"I shouldn't mind trying it," said Gordon. "Wonder when he will return."

In the little room, Tom was saying: —

"I can ask you, old fellow, for mother and Bessie are very fond of you, and the truth is, I do feel rather blue over this thing. I am the only man in two families, as it were. Mr. Winthrop, you know, is almost helpless, and my mother will miss me quite as much as my wife. If you will run out often, Smiley, and cheer them up, and if you will drop into the office now and then, and chat with Scrimmager, giving me long letters from your graphic pen, why, I will endure my banishment as well as I can."

Smiley removed his glasses, and took his friend's hand.

"I'll do it with sincere pleasure, Tom, and more too; can't I take your place in the office, or, at least, assist Scrimmager? I might write letters, you know; and there is nothing for me to do except to coach my pupils for a few hours every day."

"The very thing!" said Tom. "Old Ten-per-cent would not have a stranger about, but you might help him. Come with me to the office and let us settle it. You are quite sure that it will not affect any of your plans?"

"It will make me happier, old fellow. I have not forgotten the help I received in college."

As the two friends passed out, there were more hand-shakings and cordial good-bys, and some threats of going to see Tom off.

At the office, Scrimmager was bending low over some books and papers when Tom entered and proposed his new plan.

The old man frowned at first, but his brow cleared when Tom said that Smiley was one of the men you could trust fully, and it would be some comfort to know that he would assist Mr. Scrimmager during his own absence.

"You must not only counsel but command, Mr. Scrimmager," said Smiley. "You remember how you used to shake us when we boys used your mucilage and filled the bottle with water."

The old man laughed.

"You were torments in those days, both of you. Shall I give him your desk, Mr. Thomas?"

"Yes, I will arrange it."

For an hour Tom worked diligently sorting and arranging papers; some were sent to his home, others were packed securely away, and a few were left for reference.

"Now," said Tom, "here is your chair of state, Smiley. When you can spare time, Scrimmager will tell you just what to do, and you must draw on me for any compensation you think best."

While they were still talking, Bessie and Mrs. Sylvester came in, bringing the boy with them; they had been to the photographer's, at Tom's request, and had also purchased many things for Tom's comfort.

Bessie greeted Mr. Smiley kindly, and then crossed to Mr. Scrimmager's desk, for her boy was already in the old man's arms.

"You quite approve of this journey, do you not?" asked Bessie.

"It is the only course," replied Mr. Scrimmager, "and Mr. Thomas can attend to matters better than any substitute. I would have taken his place if possible."

"Oh, no," said Bessie, "you are needed here. Mamma would despair without you, and I hope you will come out to Brookford very often; it will be so lonely."

"You must come and stay every day while papa is gone," said Dick.

"Oh, no; you would grow tired of me."

"Papa, papa," shouted the boy to his father, who was talking earnestly with his mother and Mr. Smiley; "papa, please tell Skim to come out to our house to live while you are gone. Mamma says it will be lonely, and I want Skim."

Tom turned quickly.

"My dear child," said he, "it would give me great pleasure if Mr. Scrimmager would do so. I have been troubled about the long evenings for mamma and grandma. Do you think you could manage it?"

Old Ten-per-cent smiled.

"It would not be a difficult task to exchange my hall bedroom for your beautiful home," said he.

"Then do come, by all means," said Bessie, eagerly, while Mrs. Sylvester declared it would be a deed of charity, for they would be forlorn indeed without some one coming in daily with news of the outside world.

"There, Skim, I knew so," said Dick; "they all

want you, but you belong to me, and I will call you early for the train."

The clerks laughed, and the old man said softly to himself: —

"The boy little dreams that I have reasons of my own for wishing to be there."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BOY TAKES A JOURNEY.

TOM had been absent nearly four months, and the boy had been unusually good. At school the teacher found him restless, but strictly obedient, and, as she repeatedly said to Bessie, "a model pupil."

Old David was often tried in various ways, and sometimes asserted that Master Dick was "most unaccountable for goodness and dreadful for mischief."

Bessie's letters to her husband told many a tale which caused poor Tom to laugh and cry by turns; stories true and trying to the young mother, but infinitely amusing to the lonely man, who was still let and hindered concerning the business he had gone so far to arrange.

Tom's letters to the child were strange mixtures of advice and affection; those to the family full of graphic pictures of new sights and experiences, with a private enclosure for the wife's eyes.

These letters of journeys, following the impression created by Tom's departure, impressed young Dick in a manner quite unforeseen to the family.

The daily table-talk of steamers, cars, coaches, and

tickets proved wonderfully exciting to the boy, who listened eagerly, and faithfully reported it to his friend Claude, who was over-fond of boasting of his long journeys down to Connecticut to see his grandfather. Claude being Dick's senior by three years, his accounts bordered on the marvellous.

The boys decided to travel; decided suddenly on their way to school. There was neither wilfulness, malice, nor those other qualities so forcibly described by Mark Twain; the inspiring cause was the boy's love of adventure, stimulated by the family conversation and the letters from abroad.

Dick never dreamed of causing one moment's anxiety. He wanted to go, and why not? Heedlessness and carelessness forbade all memory of the friends at home; deliberate wickedness did not enter into their plans, and young Dick was wholly unconscious of his reputation as a dreadful boy.

Many a warm-hearted, generous, manly boy has committed some foolish act which has worked unlimited grief to his family, and future chagrin to himself, just as innocently and thoughtlessly as Dick and Claude undertook their famous journey; and no punishment is too severe for the possessors of sharp tongues and callous hearts who ascribe evil to boyish escapades, and drive to desperate deeds the boy whose ignorance of the world leads him to explore it

"Dick has been such a comfort," said Bessie, one morning, as the boy excused himself from the breakfast table, and hurried away to school. "He prom-

ised his papa that he would take care of me; and his efforts to do so are amusing."

"He is growing manly every day," replied Mr. Scrimmager; "manly and tall. How surprised Mr. Thomas will be to see him when he returns!"

"Especially if he remains two years," said Bessie, with a sigh, as she watched her boy crossing the lawn.

"His reasons for all his mischief are so genuine," said Mr. Scrimmager, "that one cannot help being amused — especially when he put the turtle into David's bed last fall. There was no thought of a trick, but a desire to befriend the turtle; and David's room was the nearest. He told me it would be lonely and cold all alone."

"Yes," said Bessie, laughing, "and the very next day he brought it into the house, and deposited it in the very centre of my down quilt."

"He has an innate horror of suffering, and a peculiar dread of the cold," said his grandmother; "one night he wished God would wrap a blanket about the sky, so the poor stars would not look so cold."

"A warmer, kinder heart never beat," said Mr. Scrimmager; "and I am quite incensed to hear that his pranks are ascribed to evil motives."

"Never mind," said Bessie; "we know his good qualities; and his home-life shall not be spoiled. He is not the only child who is made to suffer through indiscreet friends."

A few hours later, the subject of this conversation

was missing. He had taken his lunch-box as usual, and, as usual, met Claude at the end of the lawn. Both boys were seen going over the hill; but neither had been at school.

When three o'clock came, Bessie grew a little alarmed, and hurried away, only to learn that his absence was ascribed to some trifling illness, and the teacher was about to inquire for him.

Mrs. Sylvester went in one direction, and the boy's mother in another.

When old David was questioned, on his return from town that afternoon, he said: —

"Indade, mam, I mind Master Dick's tryin' to walk like his father, and the fine step of him, as he marched away this mornin'. It's but a bit of play, mam, and they'll soon be here."

No, they had not been in school; in fact, Dick had said he was going to see his papa some day — going on a great ship.

Bessie was now terribly alarmed, and sent at once to Mr. Scrimmager, who was sitting at his desk, as usual.

"Good Heavens! you cannot mean it!" said the old man, as David told the story.

Bessie would not send a telegram, lest it might be misconstrued, and cause too much excitement.

"Indade it's true, sir; there's not a sign of him been seen since the early mornin'; and the ladies are sore distrest."

Mr. Scrimmager put down his pen, put on his overcoat, without removing the thin office-coat he

always wore, and rushed from the office. When he reached the foot of the stairs, it occurred to him that he did not know where to go or what to do. Bessie's brief note mentioning the ship was his only clew. He must go at once to her and learn something more; meantime, he hurried out, looking like an escaped lunatic, with his summer coat floating below his outside one, and his old straw hat, worn in the office to protect his bald head, far back on his cranium.

People stared — some smiled, and others said, "Another ship in, and Scrimmager is on the drive. That man is business to the tips of his toes."

Wishing to spare Bessie's feelings, he went quietly to the chief of police, and stated the case, requesting that perfect quiet should be maintained until he had consulted with the boy's mother.

The chief was extremely polite; he would await instructions, and do all in his power to assist Mr. Scrimmager.

Again the old gentleman hurried on, and took the train for Brookford.

Tom's mother was away consoling the mother of Claude, who was in hysterics and alone with her servants, the boy's father being in Europe. Mrs. Sylvester had sent the nurse out with Claude's little sister, while she devoted herself to the nervous woman.

Mrs. Bessie was at home. She had collected facts and traced the children to "White's corner," where they had doubtless taken the horse-cars for Boston.

She had stationed some one there to see the conductor of No. 26 when he returned. It must have been that car. Claude had some money. His mother had given him a new, shining quarter that morning. Dick had five cents and his luncheon. They were going to find their fathers. Europe was over the sea, so were the other places with the funny names, and they would go and see wonderful things — turtles as big as the door of the carriage-house, and elephants. This they had told a boy who was waiting around the horse-car station.

He asked them if their folks knew, and Dick had answered, "My mamma will be glad; she said it was too bad to keep me away from poor, lonely papa."

Bessie knew at once from the reply that it was Dick.

Bessie had let the words escape her while she was getting the boy ready for bed, never dreaming that her child was putting his own construction upon them.

Mr. Scrimmager saw the conductor of "26." He remembered the little chaps; they said they were going to see their papas, and he supposed it was all right; he saw them on board of an East Boston car, — nice little fellows; one of them offered him a sandwich from his lunch-box.

That was Dick; he was constantly giving something away, and more than once he had pitied the poor drivers.

Mr. Scrimmager and Bessie decided to go at once to East Boston.

"On the whole," said Bessie, as the horses turned into her own grounds, "on the whole, perhaps I had better remain here, if they should return, and you will send me word immediately."

Mr. Scrimmager commended her wisdom, and, as he turned away, he said:—

"How cool she is! I really do not know what to make of her."

CHAPTER XXII.

"SKIM" TURNS TRAMP.

BESSIE was externally calm; she had anticipated all sorts of trials when Tom left her, and had reasoned with herself more than with her boy.

"I should be worse than weak," she said, "if every boyish escapade filled me with terror; not only weak, but unfit to train my son."

Yet she had never, even in her worst imaginings, thought of Dick as running away. She had always connected that with vicious boys and those whose heads were full of something called "trash," written for their snare and delusion.

Now for the first time in her life she was brought face to face with a new fact, and made to realize that the restless activity of boyhood sometimes seeks outlets unlooked-for by the most cautious parents.

If Dick at four and Claude at seven could keep the neighborhood in a fever of excitement, what could she do, or hope to do, with him at fifteen?

Mrs. Bessie counted the possibilities, and assumed a calmness she did not feel.

"I must not tell Tom," she said; "it would worry him, and he would fancy him doing something still worse."

About five o'clock Mr. Smiley came, without Mr. Scrimmager; he had tracked the runaways; they had reached East Boston, and were seen talking with a boy, who promised to row them out to a large ship. The man thought they were small ones to be out alone, but the boy said it was all right, "the little kids were going to their fathers, on board."

Mr. Smiley said they were now on board without doubt, and Mr. Scrimmager would soon report them.

Bessie hastened to give these crumbs of comfort to Claude's mother; she was still hysterical, but somewhat calmer than in the afternoon, thanks to Mrs. Sylvester's wise treatment.

"What do you think? Will they ever get back? Will my poor Claude be drowned? Do telegraph once more," she said, breathlessly, as Bessie entered.

"It is not necessary," said Bessie, who was trembling with eagerness to see her child; "everything is being done. Mr. Smiley thinks the officers will keep them on board to-night, and send them over in the morning."

"And my poor boy cannot give me his good-night kiss," exclaimed the nervous mother.

"We should be thankful that they are spared to us," said Bessie; "they might have been drowned, or run over by the horse-car, or carried away like poor Charlie Ross. I am so happy to know that they are safe."

Mrs. Sylvester gave the daughter-in-law a grateful glance.

"You are quite right, dear," she said; "we

women who are intrusted with boys must be courageous or they will despise us and neglect our teachings. I will remain here until some further tidings are sent us, and I am glad that Mr. Smiley has come out to remain with us."

As night advanced, and the truants did not return, Bessie found herself growing more and more restless, and constantly thinking all would go well if Tom were only at home.

She could not content herself within doors; she could not even sit down, although Mr. Smiley was telling her how impossible it would be for them to get far away.

About nine o'clock in the evening Mr. Scrimmager sent another message, saying: —

"The lads were not allowed to go on board the ship; went back to main land; will find them soon. Keep up your courage."

Bessie did keep up her courage; she was determined to hope on, although her lips were white, and Mr. Smiley saw that she did not eat when the servant brought them some refreshments.

"They were not drowned," she said, "and their money must be all gone; poor babies, how tired they must be. I do hope some one will be kind to them."

Some one was very kind to them at that very moment, — although Bessie did not know it.

"I have taught him what to do," said Bessie to Mr. Smiley, "if he should ever lose his way; he will tell his name, his father's place of business, and his home; he knows perfectly what to do. When he

was younger, I had a little medal fastened under his clothing, which told the story, but I never dreamed of this."

Poor Bessie! The things we do not expect are always coming to us.

While she talked with Mr. Smiley she heard, rather than saw, some one coming up the walk, and in a few moments Mr. Scrimmager appeared, carrying his hat in one hand, while he wiped the perspiration from his brow with the other.

"I am sure they are all right," he said, when he saw Bessie's frightened face. "You see, they started to walk home. Two different people informed me so; and I dare say they found some kind friend to take them in, and they will be returned safely."

"Of course they will," said Mr. Smiley, confidently.

Bessie was trying to overcome the bitter disappointment she felt on seeing her old friend return without the children. She had rested securely in the belief that Dick would appear when he did; now no one could tell where they might be; perhaps sleeping by the roadside, or carried off by tramps.

It was very hard to tell Claude's mother this, and Bessie delegated the task to Mr. Smiley; while their old friend rested, and tried to show her the utter impossibility of any harm coming to the children.

His anxious face contradicted his words, but still he talked on, telling stories of his boyhood, of boys he had known, and then praising little Dick.

It was nearly midnight when Mr. Smiley returned

and found Mr. Scrimmager still talking, while Mrs. Bessie's face grew paler and paler.

Mr. Smiley reported unfavorably as to Claude's mother. She was terribly excited, he said, and Mrs. Sylvester could not leave her. Would Bessie come there, or would she wait and watch at home?

Bessie would remain at home and wait for an answer from the chief of police. Mr. Scrimmager had reported to him, and something more must be done. What should it be?

When the clock struck one, both gentlemen urged Mrs. Bessie to retire and try to sleep, promising her that her boy should welcome her in the early morning. It was impossible.

Sleep, with little Dick somewhere, no one could tell where, and Tom so far away, so very far that he could not help her! It was not to be thought of.

Mr. Smiley found the servants all up anxiously waiting for tidings, and cook was urged to prepare some coffee for Mrs. Bessie.

"Let it be strong," said he; "she needs it. I have seen the time when it has been food as well as drink for me."

When it was ready, he carried it to her himself, and was glad to see her sip it, although she did so to reward him for his care and kindness.

"I am afraid my courage is waning," said she. "I seem to see my poor boy's tired face turned up to the stars, — the stars he has always felt so sorry for."

"Oh! no," said Mr. Smiley. "He is like his fa-

ther, always fortunate. Tom never failed to turn up all right, no matter what happened."

"Poor Dick is so young," said Bessie.

"But very bright," responded Mr. Smiley.

"And wise beyond his years," added Mr. Scrimmager. "Why, I would trust the lad anywhere."

Suddenly a footfall was heard on the porch, and out of the darkness and dew came a little figure, much soiled and very weary, saying: —

"Hello, mamma! hello, Skim!" and in another moment the child was in his mother's arms.

Wet, cold, tired, hungry, and sleepy, he was no longer a conquering hero, and yet Skim turned his face away, while Bessie wept over him, and Smiley ran out to interview the stars.

"Dick, my darling, where have you been?"

"Everywhere," was the brief answer. The boy was too weary to tell more.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DICK CONFESSES.

As the boy's head fell on his mother's breast, some one knelt to remove the dusty shoes, and a glass of milk was given him, but no story of his wanderings could be told that night, only "Claude had gone home; the man carried Claude home 'cause he was afraid of the dark; he was a kind man, and he didn't find them for a big, long while, — no, he didn't find them, they found him," and that was all the anxious watchers heard that night.

Early next morning, before the exhausted child opened his eyes, a message came from Mr. Livingston; he had heard of the young travellers, but did not know of their safety. His message was peculiar and comforting: —

"Do not be alarmed. I would not give a picayune for a boy who does not fill his mother's heart with aches, and her hands with torn pantaloons."

Yes, Bessie was comforted. If a good man like Mr. Livingston, the father of two grown-up sons, could think thus, she must be courageous and hope for good results. While the family sat at breakfast, Mr. Livingston appeared.

"No use," said he; "I couldn't swallow my coffee until I heard something more. They did not know anything at the office, and Dormer slept in his clothes last night for fear you might need him. What tidings?"

"He is asleep upstairs," said Bessie, briefly.

"Thank the Lord!" ejaculated the lawyer, as he dropped into a chair, and every one present silently uttered a fervent "Amen."

"If that boy," said Mr. Livingston, "lives to grow up, he will make his mark. Mind, now, he will do it; your commonplace, goody-good youngsters never amount to much, — they lack the bold face, the vim, which ensurse success in the nineteenth century."

"Mrs. Bessie, favor me with a cup of your choice coffee; that rascal of yours has robbed me of my breakfast, and now, as reward, I purpose remaining to hear his account of his experiences; it will make me feel twenty years younger."

"I am afraid you will all spoil him," said the young mother. "I want him to understand that he has done wrong. He must learn to consider others, and not follow every whim."

"Exactly!" said Mr. Livingston, "exactly! But if you should mention punishment of any sort, I would like to say that he may have had it already — tired little feet, a hungry stomach, and all manner of fears, for instance. His experience will doubtless forbid another excursion during his minority."

"I hope so," said Mr. Smiley. "Let us request him to confer with his friends, however, before he sets out."

Little Dick slept late; and when he was at last ushered into the breakfast-room, Mr. Smiley and Mr. Scrimmager had gone to town, while Mr. Livingston remained to hear the child's story. It was brief and characteristic, but faithfully taken down by the lawyer, who was an expert shorthand writer.

"I know poor young Tom will value it," he said.

"Dick dear, did you think of leaving mamma for a long time when you went away yesterday?" asked Bessie.

The boy looked up surprised. "Oh, no!" he said. "Claude said we would go some time, and I thought you would be glad; so we went."

"How did you go, Dick?"

"In the horse-cars some, and some in a little boat; and we walked and walked. It's an awful big world; isn't it?"

"Yes; but tell us, please, all about the places and people you saw," urged Mr. Livingston.

"Begin at the beginning, dear," suggested Bessie.

"Yes," said Dick, "when I said good-by—"

"And started for school," urged the grandmother.

"Well, Claude was down by the little pine-tree, and he said, 'Hello!' and I said, 'Hello!' and he said, 'I've got a quarter ma gave me,' and I said, 'Have you?' and we went in most to Miss Greenough's, and we looked down the hill, and there was

the horse-car, and Claude said, 'Less go to Urup now,' an' I said, 'All right'; so we went. The horse-car man said we was too young to travel alone. But Claude told him we was going to our papas; so he laughed. And we didn't know which ship; but we went on a boat, and Claude paid for me, and a man said we was two spishous boys, and I said, 'No, sir; my name is Dick Sylvester, and my papa's gone on board a ship. I'm going to see him.' I suppose he knew some boy whose name was Spishous. We asked a man where the ship was, and he said, 'Is it a Kewnarder?' and I said, 'I think so,' and he said, 'There is a Kewnarder off there'; and he went off, and we saw a boy, and he said he would take us to the ship for what money we had, and what was in our boxes and pockets. Claude didn't have much; he had eated it up. But I had two cookies, and a pencil, and a rubber, and he took them; but my pocket was too small, as I only had a handkerchief, and he took that, and he said, would we go out to the ship now, and we said yes; and he rowed out where the water was blue, and the boat shook, and Claude cried, and the big boy said if he cried any more a shark would come and eat him up, and then we went pooty close to a ship, and they wouldn't let us come on board, and he rowed back, and told us to go home fast as we could 'cause the 'geevies' would catch us, and I asked him if they were sharks too, and he said, 'Yes, you bet'; and I didn't like that boy; and we was hungry, and it grew colder, and

Claude cried again ; but I did not cry, only I wanted some money or some bread so I could get home. Then we saw a big fat man, with glasses on, and he saw Claude crying, and he said what was the matter, and I told him, and he said, 'You are very wicked children; but I will put you on this car, which will take you to your car, and then you must go right home'; and he said somethin' to the conductor, and gave him some money, and the man said, 'This car doesn't go any farther'; and then Claude was asleep, and he was cross when I said, 'Now we must walk,' 'cause we did not have any money, and we must go home. Claude said he wanted to see his mother and the baby; and sometimes we set down, and sometimes we walked; but our feet was so tired, and it was getting dark, and Claude would cry ever so much. It is very dark out of doors nights. When we walked some more, we sat down, and I heard a wagon, and I said, 'Please, sir, will you take us home?' and the man's horse jumped; he was afraid of a little boy like me, and the man said, 'What the devil!' just like David does, and then I told him I was Dick Sylvester, and who my papa was, and he said, 'Land o' Goshen! I used to bring milk to your house,' and he said, 'Why! you're the dreadful boy they talk about!' and I said, 'No, sir,'—I wasn't always dreadful, I said my prayers every night, and then I thought about mamma hearing them, and something hurt in my throat, and I most cried, but not quite; and he said, 'Well, I'll leave you at the

end of the road going up your hill, but my horse is tired'; and then Claude cried so he took him home, and that's all. But I don't believe papa will ever get back, Urup's such a long ways off."

Mrs. Bessie did not speak when the boy finished speaking. She was thinking of the little forlorn figures sitting on the roadside, and Dick's grandmother was trying to hide her tears.

"Well, well," said Mr. Livingston, "and you young wretches never thought of the poor mothers wondering and mourning for you, of the empty cribs, and all the trouble you were making. I should like to know what you did think, anyway?"

"When it was light I thought of going to papa, and when it was dark I wanted mamma and grandma and Skim, and I was afraid I was lost."

"But you did not cry, Little Chap; remember that," said the lawyer, with some pride.

"No, I only most cried," said Dick, honestly. "Mamma said, 'When you want to see your way clear you mustn't fill your eyes with tears,' and—"

"There, there; what did I tell you?" said Mr. Livingston; "you women won't believe it, but you go on dropping seeds like that, and they will spring up."

"I had forgotten it," said Bessie. "Dick dear, what will papa say when I tell him that you went away and left me here—in fact, that you were guilty of running away?"

"Oh, no," said the boy, earnestly; "oh, no,

mamma, we walked; we didn't run once, and I guess papa won't care, when I said my prayer for him on the side of the road."

No amount of reasoning could convince Dick, then or afterwards, that he had been guilty of running away; but for many weeks he never slept without remembering "the poor little children who were away from home in the darkness and gloom."

CHAPTER XXIV.

TOM IN EXILE.

MR. LIVINGSTON's report of Dick's journey reached the boy's father during one of those dark hours when a man feels that fate is using him for a target and he is powerless to move.

To do Tom Sylvester justice, it required numerous blows and general hard treatment to convince him that circumstances environ one with chains of iron; circumstances, too, entirely beyond individual control. He found life in Zanzibar very real and stern, and the business was being managed, or mismanaged, to suit the agents in charge. He wrote Scrimmager long letters, and fretted, in secret, over the necessary delay before a reply could reach him.

True to his promise made Bessie when they were married, to confide implicitly in her, he sent her full accounts of the mishaps, the blunders, and the complications attending his search. Things were very dark; aside from some business matters which he well knew needed "Old Ten-per-cent's" clear head to manage, there was the fret and worry of finding, or trying to find, the witnesses so important.

When Mr. Livingston's packet reached Tom, with cheerful letters from Bessie and his mother, he sat down to read them as a tired, hungry man sits down to a well-spread board; and when he had laughed merrily over Dick's childish chatter, which was faithfully written down for him by Bessie, he began to feel better and take more hopeful views of his surroundings.

When Tom first landed, he thought it quite possible for him to return to Boston within a year, or fourteen months, at most. Now, he was quite sure that his search was just begun; and this conviction, to a man who was virtually banished from home, with all its joys and comforts, was not inspiring. When he had finished reading all the letters, with one from Smiley, and a lively, sparkling epistle from Gordon, telling him of all the doings at the Colonial Club, he was quite another man, ready once more to do battle with foes and fortune. He spent half the night in getting his letters ready to send off, and in the morning, after making some necessary purchases with the agent, he set out for a little place in the interior, where he hoped to find a woman who was once employed by his father. He had been several weeks trying to find her, and had at last succeeded in learning her whereabouts.

Tom found her sick and unhappy.

"Did she remember Captain Sylvester?"

"Yes; he was a fine gentleman."

"Would she tell her visitor something of him? He was a relative, and since his death they were

glad to hear anything concerning his life among strangers."

The woman's startled look surprised Tom, and her question gave him a clew to her thoughts.

"Did any one send you here?"

"No; I am doing business in Zanzibar, and I make it a rule to visit all who knew my relative." Tom had his own reasons for not saying "his father."

"Were you ever here before?" she asked.

"Never."

"Do you know any people hereabouts?"

"Only those connected with the business-house which I represent."

The woman hesitated before resuming the conversation, and Tom embraced the opportunity to comment on the terrors of homesickness, on the hardship of being separated from wife and family, and somehow — Tom never was able to tell quite how — he mentioned his boy, with the peculiar emphasis on the two words known to all who have listened to the stories of a fond young papa concerning his first-born son.

The woman seemed interested.

"How old is he?"

"About five now," said Tom, with a sigh.

"What is his name?"

"He named himself Dick."

"Oh," said the woman, with an involuntary shudder, "it is a bad name; don't let him keep it!"

Tom opened his eyes in amazement. What possible dislike could this stranger have to his boy's

name? Suddenly it occurred to him that the woman must have been employed by his father while his faithless friend was with him; if he proceeded cautiously, he might learn not only the particulars of the marriage, but the present state of affairs. The woman's peculiar, nervous manner and her evident unhappiness led Tom to think she had seen great sorrow, and her pleasure in talking about the boy induced him to continue the conversation in that direction. She was much amused when her visitor related some of the child's pranks and quaint speeches, and at last she inquired how he named himself.

"It is a long story," said Tom, "and some day when I am out this way I will tell you. Just now you seem tired, and my good mother tells me that any one who wearies an invalid is wantonly cruel."

Tom wished to get away and think over matters before committing himself, but the woman's sharp eyes never left his face.

"I should like to see the child," she said; "I love children."

Not a word concerning her ill health or Tom's sympathy.

"I have his picture," said Tom, "and a good one, too. You shall see it."

Tom opened his watch as he spoke. It was a delight to find some one who cared enough to see his child, when even his own cousin had not seemed interested.

He approached the woman's chair, and held the

pictures toward her, Bessie's on one side and the boy's on the other.

"Let me take it in my hand," said she; "my eyes are not good of late, owing to the pain in my head."

Tom detached the chain and passed it to her, while the woman turned it now this way, now that.

"He is a beautiful child," she said; "too beautiful to be called Dick."

"I wish you would tell me why you dislike the name so much," said Tom.

The woman did not seem to hear him.

"Yes, he is beautiful and the mother is beautiful, too; what would she do if he should die, or go wrong?"

Tom was startled by her earnestness.

"I pray he will do neither," said Tom.

"Praying will not help. I have tried it often, often."

Tom waited. He knew little of hopeless misery; he was told that this sick woman could speak to him of his dead father, that she was employed by him for some house service when a mere girl, and her name appeared once or twice on the old books of the house as "Mary," — no more.

"How you must love him," she said, as she turned the watch about; "ah me! it is a great, proud day when a woman holds her child in her arms."

"Yes, we love him very much," said Tom; "but he is a strange child, — few people understand him."

"Strange," she said; "what do you mean by that?"

"Peculiar," said Tom; "saying all manner of queer things, and doing many like those I told you of. He is very active, too, never idle, never quiet, even when sleeping."

"But clear in his head?" she asked, eagerly.

"Very; almost too clear," said Tom, with a laugh.

"I hope he will not die, or go wrong."

Her interest in little Dick induced Tom to turn the watch and disclose the picture of his mother, opposite the face.

"There," he said, "is little Dick's grandma, and one of the best women in the whole world."

The woman looked at the face steadily for a long time without speaking. At last she said: —

"You have a queer way of doing this among your people."

"Doing what?"

"Putting pictures in your watch-cases; some of the skippers do it, and the clerks wear their sweethearts in that way."

"It is convenient and pleasant," said Tom. "In college we had our mothers and sisters, then our sweethearts, and now our wives and babies; now tell me what do you think of little Dick's grandma?"

"I have seen her before," said she, shortly.

"Seen her, — my —" Tom hesitated.

"Yes," said the woman, "but I am tired. Good-by."

"May I come again," asked Tom, "and bring some gifts from my home?"

"There is nothing to come for, but come if you like," was the ungracious reply.

CHAPTER XXV.

DICK BELIEVES IN FREEDOM.

TOM left in a puzzled frame of mind, and returned to his lodgings to re-read a letter from Scrimmager. Yes, it was very clear, — the request was almost a command: —

"Find, if you can, my dear Mr. Thomas, a woman named Mary, who served your father for two years, and suddenly went away, about the time Mr. Dick Weaver left for Bombay. She was at that time very pretty, the daughter of a sea-captain, who died there, I think; quite young, and much attached to your father. You must work cautiously. If my suspicions are correct, she can end your search, if she will speak. I fear she will not. Meantime, Mr. Livingston has quieted Weaver for the present. For your boy's sake, find Mary, and urge her to talk of the past. I am very sure she returned to the old neighborhood some years ago; in fact, I have good reason to think that a letter addressed to me, asking for aid, some two years since, and signed Mary Coustan, was written by her at the instigation of Weaver."

All this Tom committed to memory, with other particulars furnished by his mother and Mr. Living-

ston; the injunction to work for his son's sake was not needed.

While his eagerness to learn the truth caused him to work constantly, he was also becoming cautious, and even suspicious. He found many discrepancies in the accounts, and numerous instances of unfair dealing which caused him much uneasiness, and then he could not help feeling discouraged concerning the immediate business in hand.

While he was working, planning, and plotting among strangers, Mrs. Bessie was secretly mourning for him and openly trying to train her son; so the weeks rolled by, and winter, came.

"Depend upon it, the clew will be found," said Mr. Livingston. "If my old friend Tom married while his first wife was living, he did so innocently. There is deception somewhere. And as to the heir, why, bless you, Maggie, you would have enough left, and the business could not be taken from you. It is your business. You made it, virtually; your husband often said so."

"If it be true," said Mrs. Sylvester, "if the rightful heir does live, and we have not known it until now, we will do him tardy justice. He must be at least thirty years of age."

"Oh, yes; thirty-two, Weaver says. But that man is a black-hearted rascal, and it is very strange that no one remembers the boy or man. The story of his being a chronic invalid and mentally deficient is absurd. I want Tom to ferret out the whole thing, if it takes five years."

"Oh, dear, no!" exclaimed Bessie; "we could not spare him. If he remains much longer, I shall go out myself. You would go, wouldn't you, mamma?"

"No, she would not," said Mr. Livingston, decidedly. "Maggie must end her days here, with her old friends, and you must educate that Little Chap. I want him in my office."

"Perhaps he will choose another course," said Mr. Scrimmager, looking up from his paper; "our little friend will never be content with ordinary routine work."

"Bless my soul, man, do you mean to say that a lawyer in good practice performs only routine work?"

Before Mr. Scrimmager could reply, little Dick came in, bringing a forlorn looking cur.

"Mamma," said the boy, "he was run over, and you must mend his leg."

"What an ugly creature!" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Put him down, dear," said Bessie.

Dick obeyed, and placed the wounded animal on an elegant plush sofa pillow, near his grandmother.

The dog looked wistfully from one to the other.

"I'll get your medicine-chest, mamma, and you will please set his leg, if it is broken, as David says; and to-morrow Dr. Corbett can come and see if it is all right."

"Corbett coming out here for a dog!" exclaimed the lawyer. "Oh, Dick, you know no[illegible] of the world."

"We might telegraph for h[illegible] know you will, won't [illegible]

"Not to-night, my dear. I am something of a surgeon; let me try my skill."

With Bessie's assistance, the wounded leg was properly dressed, and the dog fed before it was put in an unused basket.

"Better send him out for David to look after," said Mr. Livingston.

"No, sir," said Dick, with flashing eyes; "he is my guest, and he will sleep in my room; mamma says give your guest the best you have."

"Where did you find him, major?" asked Mr. Livingston, who was fond of teasing the child with all sorts of titles.

"He was trying to come up our walk and couldn't; I saw him from the window, and ran out; he is a beauty, isn't he?"

Every one laughed at this question, for a more unprepossessing creature one seldom sees.

Dick was not disconcerted.

"Well," said he, with a compassionate glance, "he has handsome eyes."

The boy was right; the large, liquid, appealing eyes of the four-footed stranger were indeed fine, and when the boy marched away to bed, bravely tugging the basket containing the poor cur, even Mr. Livingston found it somewhat interesting.

On the following day, Dick treated the family to another sensation.

Mr. Livingston had gone back to town, having run out for the night to consult and counsel his friends. Mr. Scrimmager was hard at work in the office, and

the ladies quietly sewing, when a stout, red-faced woman entered the little room without announcing herself; she had brushed by the servant, and now stood with arms akimbo and eyes flashing.

"Rich, or no rich, marm, I shan't stand it! I have heard as how he was a dreadful boy, but I couldn't think it until now, and now it's got to be stopped."

Bessie rose tremblingly. Mrs. Sylvester asked, with white lips:—

"What has the child done?"

"Done! he's always a doin'. Only yesterday, on his way to school, he let every blessed one of the old brown hen's chickens out of the coop, and, when I asked him what he did it for, says he, 'They were sticking their little necks out and asking me to.' I declare, marm, I would have spanked him if he'd a been mine, and he as cool as a cucumber."

"I am very sorry," said Bessie. "Was that all?"

"All! No, marm. Not satisfied with that, he sassed me, and wanted to know how I would like to be shut up there all day. This mornin', when he come along, he didn't seem scared a mite, for all I scolded him; and what does he do but ask my Teddy if he wasn't tired of sitting in his chair, and Teddy, knowing no better, said yes, and he untied him, and now the goodness only knows where Teddy is. I always tie him in his chair till I get my work done in the mornin', 'cause he's so full of mischief and races round so."

"My little boy is very tender-hearted," said Bessie. "I dare say he intended to be kind."

"I should think so. Why, when I scolded him about Teddy, he just looked at me with his big eyes, and says he: 'Does your face hurt when it's so red? Mine did when I made it all red down to Newport.'"

Bessie tried to look grave.

"Now, marm," said the woman, "my cottage is right on his way to school, and I want something done. You can't scare him, — I tried it; you can't scold him, — I've tried that too; and when I told him I'd come straight to see his ma, he said, 'She will be glad to see you, 'cause she's very kind to poor folks.'"

"What would you like to have me do?" asked Bessie. "I know my little boy does not intend to trouble you; he is very sorry when he does wrong, and only last week wanted to carry your little boy something."

The visitor was subdued, but not satisfied. What Bessie's influence might have done, we know not, for, while she was still speaking, Dick threw open the door, removed his hat, and stood looking at the visitor.

"You know me, don't you?" said the woman.

"Yes," said Dick; "you said you would come. Mamma, she's poor, and washes every day, and her little boy wears awful old shoes, and she ties him up, 'cause he hasn't any nurse, and I guess you better give her some money."

This cool, honest statement, made with the utmost simplicity, completely surprised the woman. She

looked for a moment at the boy, who was regarding her with fearless eyes, and then said :—

"Well, you are the curiesest young one I ever see."

After that Dick became her fast friend, and no more complaints were made.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WOMAN CALLED MARY.

WHEN Tom called again upon the sick woman, he found her suffering from prostration, and, with the natural skill which makes every American a born nurse, or born anything which an exigency may demand, the young man prepared for her a cooling and refreshing drink.

"Your black boy is rather lazy and neglectful," said Tom. "Why not permit me to send out a nurse from the mission? You need care and companionship; these attacks make you unfit to be alone."

"I must be alone," she answered, "at least for a time. I have promised it, and your coming may make trouble for me."

"Never," said Tom. "See, I can do all manner of things like a woman. I am used to sickness at home."

"Was the boy ever sick?" asked the woman.

It was singular that the child should possess so much interest for her, but Tom gladly encouraged it.

"Very, very sick," said he. "What dark days they were, too!"

"Tell me about it. Your voice rests me. I was not always old and ugly and poor, as you see me now. I knew people, and was happy."

"Knowing people sometimes makes us unhappy," said Tom. "Since I came out here, I have learned to doubt some I once trusted."

"How it hurts!" said the woman, pressing her hand above her heart.

Tom thought she alluded to physical pain.

"Is it sharp, or dull and heavy?" asked he.

"It is both sharp and dull, and never heals. I remember when I believed every one; but tell me of the child."

"You shall hear," said Tom.

The woman was half sitting, half lying, on a bamboo settee, and a small black boy stood near, fanning her.

"Douga, you may leave me," she said; "I am better since the doctor has given me medicine."

The boy shuffled away, glad to be relieved, while the woman hastened to say: —

"You are my doctor now, sir; it will save you future trouble to be called that. Now tell me of the child, and let me see his dear little face once more."

Tom opened his watch and placed it in her thin hand, while he told the story of the Little Chap's illness, of his own horror, of Bessie's long patient watch, and his mother's kindness. When he came to the dreadful period when even the doctor despaired, the woman's eyes were full of tears.

"I am sorry I told you," said Tom; "you were

not strong enough to hear it, and you must have lost a child; forgive me, and let us talk of something else."

"No, no; I like it. It is all a picture, and it hangs close by another, darker, sadder, more hopeless."

"Will you let me see it?" said Tom. "I want to help you for my father's sake. I am Captain Sylvester's son, and you tell me he was your best friend; will you not trust me?"

"I knew you were his when you first came. But I cannot speak now; and yet why should I care for torture? Nothing that comes can be worse than the past; death will bring rest."

"Listen to me," said Tom; "listen to me as the son of your best friend. I came here in great trouble; an evil threatens the little boy I love; an evil so great that it makes me shudder to think of it. In all the world, I know of but one person who can aid me in removing this evil, or at least convince us all that removal is impossible; if that person fails to speak, the lives of all these good people will be tortured as yours has been, — wilfully, cruelly, wrongfully tortured."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed the woman; "it is impossible. Nothing could harm the boy's mother while her boy lives; nothing could hurt her, while you are true and kind."

Tom sighed.

"Were you born in the States?" he asked.

"No; at sea."

"You had just lost your father, I think, when you

consented to make my father's life endurable here in this vile climate."

"Yes; oh, yes. Do not remind me of it. He was kind and good to me; he tried to find my relatives, offered to send me to them, and taught me many things from his own books. I was happy then, — useful and happy."

"Was my father married then?" asked Tom, with a conscious tremor in his tones.

"He had been married a year, to the daughter of a missionary."

"Was his wife kind to you, also?"

"Very kind; but the climate did not agree with her. She was an invalid, and he was about going away with her, when she died; and then I went away and left him, my kindest friend. He urged me to remain, but I was young and wilful, and the temptation was strong."

"Mrs. Coustan," said Tom, eagerly, "will you tell me something of Mr. Weaver, a young man who was here with my father. He was often mentioned in my father's letters to his friends."

The woman hesitated. At last, with evident pain, she answered: —

"He was once your father's friend."

"And now?" asked Tom.

"He may not be living."

Tom pondered a moment.

"You can tell me of him with perfect safety," said he. "If living, he cannot harm you; if dead, we may find virtues to commend. As Mr. Weaver was my

father's friend, and every hour of my father's life here will be some day known to my child, I ask you to tell me of this man as part of that life, and for that child's sake."

"He could not harm your child; he would not dare."

Unconsciously she had shown her belief in his presence on earth. She did not think him dead.

"Can you tell me where he is?" asked Tom.

"I do not know."

"Have you seen him recently?"

"Not for more than two years."

"If you knew some one who could prove to you that he was even now trying to rob that little child of something more precious than gold, would you still defend him, still fail to tell all you know of the history so closely woven with that of your kind friend?"

The woman raised her head, and fastened her large dark eyes on her visitor.

"If he dares," said she, "if he dares—"

"He has already dared," said Tom, "and my poor mother is nearly heart-broken. You told me you had seen her; you know, then, that she is a woman not easily frightened, a woman to love and respect."

"I know. I saw her for a few moments, and he threatened then; but I was strong, and he dared not name his cruel thought but once. I was younger, and the blow was aimed at you."

"At me!" said Tom, in surprise.

"Yes. He took me to the States, and you were a bright, pretty boy. I almost hated you then for

being so bright and pretty, but the hate fled when I heard his dark purpose. I thought he had forgotten it, — that you were safe, — after all these years."

"He would dare all things," said Tom.

"Have you seen him? Was he in the States?"

"He was, and is," answered Tom.

"You can swear it?"

"I can swear it, for he is under the eye of a lawyer as keen to detect villany as this man is to do wrong."

"Can he not escape?"

"No, not without danger to himself; he is closely watched."

"Tell me his claim."

Tom briefly repeated the story.

The woman groaned.

"The papers were stolen. The marriage certificate is genuine; the other forged. Do not believe one word of his; do not allow any claims. Now that I have seen your face, now that I know your heart is as true and kind as your father's, and that child is in danger, I must live a little longer."

She seemed so exhausted and feeble that Tom hastened to give her a second draught of tonic.

"You will live for your own sake," he said, encouragingly; "and I will take you away on the sea, where you will have care and kindness. You shall suffer no longer. You shall testify against this man, and prove his baseness."

"I cannot; he — he — is my husband," said the woman, faintly.

"And yet he would rob another woman of the sacred name of wife," said Tom, bitterly.

"He has robbed me even of my child," sobbed the woman.

"And now seeks to rob mine," responded Tom.

The woman roused herself.

"He shall not while I live; for your child's sake, I will try to live a little longer."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DICK INVESTS IN HUMANITY.

FOR reasons of his own, Mr. Livingston kept Weaver employed in his own office when the man was able to work. His life of dissipation, and his long residence in Africa, made him very susceptible to atmospheric changes. He seemed like a man who knew he was breaking up and would not admit it, like a doggedly obstinate person, yet too weak, in his present state of health, to do more than bluster and threaten. On the whole, it was rather comfortable to be housed and fed, and supplied with money enough for ordinary expenses.

Mr. Livingston watched him closely. He knew all about his correspondence, and, unknown to Weaver, knew also his favorite haunts.

As spring advanced, and Weaver grew physically weak, he insisted on returning to Zanzibar, promising to bring living witnesses to the truth of his statements; but a physician told him the journey would prove fatal, and Weaver decided to wait until midsummer.

"Why he should be so anxious to go I cannot imagine," said the lawyer to Mrs. Sylvester. "He

does not receive letters from there, and seems to have sundered all ties, if he ever had any. The rascal has been such a rover, one doesn't know what to expect. He does hear from Bombay now and then; but the letters are unsatisfactory, and he usually goes on a spree after receiving one."

While the lawyer was meditating in Boston, Tom was caring for the victim of the man's broken ties, and using all the skill he could exert or procure to aid her recovery.

At Brookford, Dick, all unconscious of threatened disgrace or loss of fortune, was going on in his own independent, fearless fashion, delighting all who loved him, and surprising friends and foes.

One day in the spring, when every heart was rejoicing in freedom and sunlight, the two grandmothers and Bessie went into the city for the laudable purpose of purchasing the boy's first trousers. For weeks he had coaxed and entreated; but Bessie, mother-like, disliked to lose her baby in his pretty kilts and take to her arms a boy decked in the ungraceful garb of his sex.

The evil day had been put off as long as possible. But even "Skim" aided and abetted the boy; and he was at last measured for the garment which would raise him at once in his estimation to the full stature of a man.

The grandmothers decided that it would be unwise to take the boy to town; and, as other shopping must be attended to, he was despatched, as usual, to the schoolroom.

Bessie looked long and earnestly at his retreating figure, and tried in vain to smile when her mother joked merrily about "the last view of her baby."

"It means more than mere change in dress," she said, thoughtfully. "It marks another step toward manhood; and I begin to doubt my ability to guide him on the way."

"Your doubt proves your conscientiousness and fitness for the work," said Mrs. Sylvester.

The three women went their way, — the mother filled with high thought and purpose, Mrs. Winthrop wondering concerning the becomingness of the new outfit, and Mrs. Sylvester dreaming of the time so near, and yet so far away, when her own boy stood before her in the full glory of his first pantaloons.

The day proved rather exhausting; for Mr. Livingston met the ladies with a budget of letters, and Mr. Scrimmager asked aid and counsel of Mrs. Sylvester.

Almost before they were aware of it, the day had fled, and Mrs. Winthrop had returned to her own home, while the mother-in-law and Bessie were hurrying to Brookford in time for their late dinner. Mr. Scrimmager, who was very busy, would follow later.

At the end of the avenue, Dick met the party, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"Dear child!" said his grandmother; "he has been impatient for his new suit."

Dick's first words did not imply it.

"Mamma!" he said, "mamma! Our David is awful; I have just discharged him."

"My dear child!" began Bessie.

"Yes'm; David persumes. Papa said cook persumed; but David persumes worse."

"What has he presumed to do?" asked Bessie, as she resigned some small packages to the boy.

"Why, you see, I heard you say that you would get a baby sister for me if you could afford it; and so I thought it was mean for Claude and the other boys to have sisters, and me without one, when I was going to wear pants and be a man, so I bought one."

"Dick, my dear!" exclaimed Bessie, as she slowly mounted the steps.

She had pictured a pretty scene with the boy when he should receive his long-coveted garment; but this was unlooked for.

She entered the house and dropped into a chair. Mrs. Sylvester followed her; and both were speechless.

Dick continued his story. His greatest merit was his exact truthfulness. His stories were always told in full, even when they reflected severely upon himself.

"Yes," said Dick, while his mother removed her wraps, "I took the money out of my bank. It was just six dollars and forty-two cents, and the Canada penny Mr. Smiley gave me; and I went over to Bob Welsh's house, 'cause he said his mother was like

the old woman in the shoe, and he wished some one would carry off their baby; for his mother went away every day to work, and his sister lived out, and the rest of 'em went to school, and he had to stay in to mind it, 'cause he is the oldest; and he said his mother said she was wore out with it nights, and so I paid him the money, and I brought it home every step of the way in my arms, and it's upstairs now on my bed, sleeping like anything, and she's real pretty; I bought the baby for you 'cause you were so nice to buy the pants for me."

Bessie did not know whether to laugh or cry. Mrs. Welsh would not be alarmed when she knew the destination of her baby girl; but Dick considered it a *bona fide* purchase; and what could be done?

She tried to explain the rights of purchase, as she went upstairs; but Dick did not hear one word.

There lay the baby — one of those rarely beautiful children that drop into forlorn homes, like a flower from the garden of Eden. Its little fair cheeks were round and rosy, its long lashes falling upon them, and the dimpled hands resting gracefully on the snowy quilt.

Dick bent over it in admiration. It was his baby, he said, — all his; and its little fingers were the cunningest in all the world.

How to reconcile the boy without wounding him was a puzzle.

"What did you tell me about David?" asked Bessie.

"He persumed, and I discharged him," repeated Dick.

"Indeed, he did, marm," said the cook; "for David told him to carry it straight back, and Master Dick would not."

"Yes," said Dick, "he tried to take her right out of my arms, and I told him I had paid for it, and it was mine. I shall never like David again."

"You see, marm," said cook, "I thought it was your business to settle it; and so I gave the little thing some milk, and it went to sleep in Master Dick's arms, and we put it here."

"And when Skim comes, I'll ask him to see about a crib for it, and it can sleep here always; so you won't be wore out nights, like Mrs. Welsh, and it can have all my baby clothes. Ain't she a beauty, grandma?"

The child was indeed a beauty; and Bessie did not wonder that her boy was proud of his purchase.

Before she could rest or dine, she wrote a brief note to Mrs. Welsh, and sent it by the "discharged" David, who was now calmer, and disposed to laugh over his conflict with the little master.

Later in the evening, when Dick slept peacefully, with his pantaloons on the pillow, above his head, and the baby's plump hand in his, Mrs. Welsh came, and carried away Little Dick's first purchase. She returned, also, the six dollars; but the forty-two cents had been spent for taffy and cakes; and as for the Canada penny, it had been swapped for some marbles.

When morning came, Dick was somewhat comforted with the thought of appearing before Claude and Robbie in his new clothes, and Mrs. Welsh's promise that the baby should visit him very often.

His exploit proved a blessing; for Bessie found means to lighten the poor woman's burdens.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE OLD, OLD COURT OF JUSTICE.

ONE day, shortly after Dick's adventure with the baby, an earnest consultation was held concerning the boy's studies.

He was too old now for Miss Greenough's kindergarten, and almost too young to go to town. Several other mothers were equally distressed; but the matter was settled by Dick, in his usual executive manner. Mr. Smiley chanced to be out one day to dinner, and the subject was broached.

"Don't you hack college boys?" asked Dick.

"Hack them! No. I help them when they are a little stupid or a little lazy; sometimes, when they are anxious to get on faster."

"I thought papa said you hacked them."

Mr. Smiley laughed.

"He said I had to 'coach' a half-dozen fellows. Was that it?"

"Yes; but 'hack' and 'coach' mean the same. Well, you come 'coach' Robbie and me; will you?"

"The very thing," said Mr. Scrimmager; "it would please Mr. Thomas, I am sure. Do you not think so, Mrs. Sylvester?"

Bessie did, provided Mr. Smiley could spare time, and would not find it tedious.

Mr. Smiley would enjoy it. He was fond of children; and Tom's boy would always seem very dear to him. He would undertake it until his friend returned.

Dick was delighted. He even enjoyed the hard tasks given; he liked overcoming difficulties, and required neither reproof nor spur.

Mr. Smiley's method of instruction was that of Colonel Parker. He believed that "facts are eyes through which we see the laws"; and his pupils spent more time among facts than books, although the latter became valued more and more as knowledge grew.

Dick's growth was astonishing. He lost nothing of his old daring and independence, but thought for himself. Now and then he would startle his tutor with some departure from established custom; but the custom was usually wrong and the boy right.

"He is a very queer boy," said Robbie's mother. "I am afraid he will never amount to much; he is so odd and unlike other children."

"Yes," responded a hearer, "I feel very sorry for Mrs. Sylvester, she is such a charming woman. It must be a great trial."

"I wonder if he does such dreadful things now, since they have a private tutor," said a neighbor.

"Oh, no. They did not dare send him to town to school, you know."

Poor Dick! he was wholly unconscious of wrong-doing, and certainly free from evil intent; but the world assails all who step out of the beaten path, either from choice or by reason of inherited traits; and many a boy has suffered quite unjustly.

His mother took him into her confidence, and was surprised to find how exact his sense of justice was; how little he valued externals, although luxury had always been his portion.

"Dick dear," she said one day, when a long letter from Tom had made the family quite despondent, "if mamma and papa should lose their money, and be compelled to live in a very small house, and in a very quiet way, what would you do?"

"I would go to work, like Bob Welsh, and earn money for you," was the prompt answer.

"But, Dick dear, you would have hard, soiled hands, and get very weary; you would miss your pony and all your comforts; and every night you would go to bed very tired."

"I know," said Dick, manfully, "just like Bob and some of the other fellows. If they stand it, I could; so don't you mind. If papa loses everything, I'll work for you; and you said you would rather have me an honest poor man than a dishonest rich one."

Surely Bessie need not fear for her boy.

So the days and weeks wore away, and at last Tom came, not alone, however; but bringing with him a sallow, dark-eyed woman, who won Bessie's heart at once, and caused Dick to offer her tributes of rabbits,

games, and books, because she was lonely and sorrowful.

Mrs. Sylvester cared for her with a sister's tenderness, and the dark eyes began to lose their hopeless look under new influences.

They gave her time to rest and grow stronger before they talked of her errand, and as she grew into their home-life her purpose also grew to defeat the monstrous wrong intended.

Dick was her cherished companion; he sat for hours at her feet, listening to her stories of the far-away countries she had seen, of the strange people she had met, and the little children less fortunate than himself.

Tom never tired of watching them; the sad-faced woman, who remembered his father so well, and this boy, with his broad brow and straight, lithe figure. He had changed so much, Tom wondered as he gazed, and sometimes started from a reverie when the boy called "papa."

There came a day when the sad woman told her story to the little family circle, and not an eye was dry when she ceased. Later, Mr. Livingston came and spent some hours with her, leaving at last with some important papers in his pocket and a smile on his fine face.

Soon after, one day when all the family were assembled, and Mr. Scrimmager left his desk to join them, Mr. Livingston came up the walk, bringing with him a man with iron gray hair and a worn, thin

face. He entered and seated him, desiring him to repeat the story told more than two years before with such defiant force.

He complied, with many protestations of regret, and had just said: —

"The rightful heir still lives, a man some years the senior of Mr. Sylvester here present, and his name is also Thomas Sylvester. This, madam," he added, turning with mock courtesy to Mrs. Sylvester, "proves your marriage illegal, and, —"

Without a note of warning, the portière parted, and a woman stood before the group, saying, in clear, bell-like tones: —

"It is false; all false."

The man fell back, and gazed at her as one might upon an apparition.

"It is false," replied the woman. "That man deceived and robbed his friend; he deceived me also; with his ill-gotten gains he took me to Bombay, and there my child was born; in my agony and loneliness, I remembered the kindest friend I had ever known since death robbed me of my father, and I named the boy Thomas Sylvester. At birth he was bright and beautiful, but a cruel whipping given him in early boyhood caused a deformity and convulsions, which ended in imbecility; he died five years ago, and was buried in the ocean."

The woman's voice faltered now for the first time, and Bessie drew her to a seat, while Mr. Livingston and Tom turned to the once confident impostor, to

find him sinking lower and lower in his chair, with his eyes still fixed upon the curtains where he had seen the woman.

"The law," began Mr. Livingston, —

"Hush!" said Bessie, softly, "the higher law rules here."

CHAPTER XXIX.

DICK EARNS MONEY.

THE boy had never been brought face to face with death before, and his first knowledge of the sad visitor came to him when they told him Aunt Mary's husband had died in the house.

Tom and Bessie questioned the propriety of informing the child, but Mary told him herself, told him so wisely and gently that the boy neither feared the grim visitor nor was surprised.

He insisted on seeing the strange, still sleeper in the library, who was honored in death by those he once sought to ruin.

"For Mary's sake," said Mrs. Sylvester, "we will give him decent burial," and Mary's tired, sad eyes thanked her, for she alone remembered the time when the man's gray hair was black and glossy, his sunken eyes bright and tender, and his lips parted for a lover's words.

It was all over now, the cruel wrong, the hard life, the little suffering boy, the imbecile youth and manhood, and the cruel taunts and sneers.

Dick went with Mary to look on the face of the dead, and comfort her with his childish wisdom.

Memories of her once happy youth, of his old tenderness, and the little child, caused the woman's eyes to overflow.

As she stood with clasped hands, weeping over the silent figure, the child looked earnestly, now at her, now at the cold, still face. The mysteries of life, which appal so many, were accepted by the boy as simply as any other daily occurrence. He saw, all about, strange plants, growing animals, and insects of marvellous shape and size, and why should this surprise or strike him with terror?

His mother had wisely left him to his own thoughts and observations in such matters, thinking it worse than futile to attempt instruction where the wisest must confess ignorance.

Dick saw life as it was, and drew his own conclusions. A funeral passing by was a necessity, he thought; so also his food and clothing. His mind had never been poisoned by frightful stories, or his active fancy cumbered with ghostly and ghastly visions. He was strong and healthy, without morbid fancies or foolish fears.

It troubled him, however, to see Mary weeping, she was so kind to him, so gentle to every one, and had been good to Grandpa Sylvester in that long ago which Dick thought he knew about, although his pilgrimage had been so short.

Ever since Mary came, he had taken her under his protection, and, without knowing it, the boy had helped her more than all the doctors or the remedies her friends procured for her.

The servants knew her as Mrs. Coustan, the name she had long been known by, but Dick called her "Aunt Mary."

In his love for her, the woman found the sweetest solace of her bitter life, and it was meet that he should stand by her side, over the coffin of her early love, over the wreck of every hope.

She stood weeping silently, thinking and weeping as women weep who have passed through the Garden of Gethsemane alone, while the world stands by. Only those who have passed through the deepest billows of the ocean of sorrow know the secret agony of quiet grief.

Dick watched Mary as her thin fingers were clasped and unclasped, while slow, blinding tears fell on the dead man's face for some time, and then, being her protector, he was led to remonstrate.

"I wouldn't cry for him any more, Aunt Mary," he said, as he reached her arm and laid his sunny head upon it. "I wouldn't cry another minute, 'cause you see if he was real good he don't want to come back here, and if he wasn't real good you don't want him."

Mary looked down upon the child one moment, and then, sitting down upon the floor, gathered him in her arms, and kissed him again and again.

Dick knew that the caresses were tearfully given, that the woman's heart was throbbing close to his own, but he did not know that the starved heart was seeking its own, and all the pent-up affection and tenderness denied expression since the sea closed

over her unfortunate darling would henceforth be his.

"That's a good Aunt Mary," he said, patting her cheek; "don't you cry any more, for I will always take care of you, and when you die you shall have a better casket than this, 'cause you are better than he is."

Oh, marvellous philosophy of childhood, bounding like a shuttlecock from the depths of pathos to the dead level of reality or absurdity!

Mary's eyes were dried before the child had ceased prattling, and together they went hand in hand to join the family. Still hand in hand they followed the remains to its last resting-place, and more than one stood aside with bowed head as the frail woman passed, leading, or being led by, a sunny-haired boy.

"Papa," asked Dick the night after the funeral, "papa, have I any money all my own?"

"You will have, boy, when you are old enough to use it."

"But now, I mean; some I can give away?"

"Grandma gives you a generous allowance every week, for such a little chap; why do you want money?"

"'Cause — I am going to take care of Aunt Mary now, always, and I want to give her some money every week, just as you do mamma."

Tom smiled.

"I will double your allowance, Dick, if you will show me the accounts as you do grandma."

"Smiley says I ought to earn it, as you do."

"Smiley is quite right; we only value things when they cost us something."

To the great surprise of Tom, no further reference was made to money at that time; but a few days later, on his return from town, he was surprised to see a little figure trudging over the hill toward the carriage-drive, — a figure wearing a pair of overalls, and bearing a small basket.

"Bessie!" exclaimed Tom, "come here, I beg of you; do tell me if this can be our boy."

Bessie came at once.

"Oh, yes," she said; "he went out fishing with David, and now we shall have an amusing account of it. David cannot be far away."

The boy came slowly up the avenue; he was evidently tired, and also engaged in deep thought. When he saw the group on the piazza, waiting for him, he said: —

"Where is Aunt Mary?"

"In the room, mourning for you; she was afraid you might fall into the river."

"Well, here is fifteen cents for her."

"Fifteen cents!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, I earned it. David helped me clean my fish, and I sold them to the Governor — "

"Dick Sylvester!" exclaimed Bessie.

Dick was unmoved.

"He said they were beauties, and he would buy all I could catch if I only brought them once a week."

Tom was highly amused. Bessie looked at the soiled face and dirty overalls with motherly chagrin.

What might have followed, neither Tom nor Bessie could even guess; but Aunt Mary appeared on the scene in time to save her little protector from reproof or injudicious remarks.

"Here, Aunt Mary," said the boy, "I have earned some money for you; it will buy you something nice. Papa, I didn't know that it took so long to earn fifteen cents."

"It depends upon how you earn it, my boy."

"Smiley says if it is honestly earned, it does not matter what you do."

Tom pondered. Was Smiley making a democrat of the boy? Was he ignoring the family position and inherited wealth? His boy — a Sylvester — selling a string of fish to the Governor! Somehow, Tom did not like it, even with all his boasted independence.

Bessie's practical good sense came to the rescue.

"Dick, dear," she said, "it is a good thing to be able to earn money, and a better thing to know how to use it."

CHAPTER XXX.

DICK IN PERIL.

NEVER did innocent fish produce a greater sensation.

Dick's father told the Governor about the boy's use of the money, and the genial executive declared that the little chap would make his own way in the world, without material assistance.

When Grandpa Winthrop heard of the transaction, he made a special offer to the boy — in fact, agreed to purchase all fish, of whatsoever kind or degree, sculpins excepted, which Dick would deliver at his house.

"It is not a bad idea," said the old gentleman, "to let the boy feel that work wins wages; and if he chooses to sit patiently waiting for bites, it is no more than we do on 'change, or did once."

Grandpa Winthrop's brain was not injured even by his second shock of paralysis.

"I do not wish to encourage a mercenary spirit," said Mrs. Winthrop, "and poor boys need the money he earns."

"Then let them earn it," responded grandpa, "as he does. There is little danger of a mercenary

spirit when the child devotes it to such a purpose. He is true to his promise, and Bessie is quite right; he has assumed the guardianship of Aunt Mary, and it will be well for us all to watch his course. Let the boy develop in the right direction, without thwarting him."

"I wonder if it was quite wise in Tom to introduce that woman into his home," said curious Mrs. Winthrop.

"Right, my dear! Why, she has been a blessing ever since her coming there, and the Little Chap could not get on without her."

In a few days Dick's fish were quite forgotten; for the restless spirit entered into the lad, and once more the household was anxious and distressed.

Unconsciously to either Tom or Bessie, the visits of Lawyer Livingston increased in number, and his interest in his friends came to be his soul's outing when worn with business cares.

Before Tom's departure for Zanzibar, his mother had heeded her son's advice and rented her house in town, after kindly providing a suitable home for Aunt Mercy in one of the many suburban towns.

When the town house was given over to strangers, and many of its beautiful ornamentations removed to Brookford or Newport, Mrs. Sylvester gladly shared her son's home until his return. When he came, her going was still delayed, and her devotion to her children made the thought of separation difficult.

Mr. Livingston's visits amused Dick and annoyed

faithful old Ten-per-cent, who still made his little trips to Brookford, and still devoted himself to his little friend.

This little friend astonished the family circle one evening by running into the library with the announcement that Judge Livingston had just called "grandma precious" darling, out in the summer-house, and he thought he was very rude to speak so to a lady.

This announcement and criticism caused Mr. Scrimmager to rise hastily to his feet, and also caused Tom to whistle the "Star-Spangled Banner." Tom always whistled that, when perturbed in spirit.

Bessie and Mr. Smiley exchanged glances before the former reproved her son, while Aunt Mary sighed deeply.

"Why not?" said Tom to himself, as Bessie took the boy upon her lap, and tried to show him some entertaining pictures. "Why not? My mother is still young, Livingston leads a solitary life in many respects, and — but hang it all; I don't want to see her dancing attendance on any man's whims; she is too good, too beautiful, too wealthy."

Tom quite forgot that such a trio of attractions only emboldened her lover.

Mr. Scrimmager saw innumerable objections; the chief one, and the best in his estimation, being that it would interfere with the business. And then, why should such a grand woman marry any man?

Bessie took a practical view of it.

If mamma loved him well enough to marry him,

it was clearly her own affair. Mr. Livingston was virtually one of the family now, and matters would not change much, for one of Mr. Livingston's daughters had just married, and the other had worn an engagement ring for a year; besides, Mr. Livingston's wisdom would make matters of business easier for mamma.

All this wisdom on the part of Mrs. Bessie failed to reconcile Tom, and yet he continued to ask himself "Why not?"

The very things we find burdensome and troublesome at one moment, are often thrust aside or forgotten the next, by the pressure of circumstances.

Tom passed a sleepless night, thinking of the new state of affairs when Mr. Livingston should claim his mother, if Dick's report was true, as he knew it must be.

On the following morning, as the day was fine, Tom ordered the chestnuts around, as he desired to drive his legal friend out a short distance to examine some property.

"Put them into the open buggy, Duncan," he said. "I will drive myself; you may leave them at the side door."

"Tom, my boy," said Mr. Livingston, "are not you a little careless about those horses? They are very high-spirited, and Duncan has not even tied them."

"We never do: there is not a gentler pair in all Boston; why, a baby could handle them."

Sir Careless went on with the examination of certain papers in his pocket-book. He was looking, he said, for a description of the farm they were to visit,— a friend had sent it to him ; perhaps it was upstairs in his dressing-room, — he would run up and see.

Mr. Livingston followed as far as the front hall, to bring hat and gloves, and no one chanced to be near at hand — no one, save Dick.

Tom's impatience in not securing the desired article at once caused Bessie and his mother to join in the search. The bustle attendant on this made every one indifferent to the crunching of wheels on the driveway, until Duncan appeared, saying, breathlessly : —

"Oh, missis ! Oh, master !" and then darted away, closely followed by poor rheumatic old David.

One glance from the windows explained all.

Dick had listened in silence to his father's remarks concerning the chestnuts, and in a few moments had driven them around the house and down the avenue before the astonished Duncan could move.

As Bessie looked from the window, she saw Dick standing erect in the buggy, hatless and fearless, with golden locks flying in the wind, while he firmly held the reins.

The chestnuts, glad to find themselves upon the road, had taken their best pace and were now fairly flying over the grounds.

"The cars !" gasped Tom, as he rushed down stairs and hurried to the stable.

Bessie's little mare, Veda, was still eating her breakfast as he hurried in and drew her from the stall.

Dick's little pony gave a low whinnie, begging to join her, but Tom passed her without one glance or thought.

Veda seemed to understand that trouble called her forth, for she held her head obediently for the bridle, and fairly dashed away as soon as Tom was seated.

No boy in sight, no chestnuts.

Tom rode like a madman. He waited neither for man nor beast, but pushed on until the station was reached. The boy was not there; thank heaven for that! He must be now on the broad roadway leading to the next town.

Tom had not seen David, although the poor old man had seen him. He had not heard Duncan, who called aloud, as he flew past, "The bridge! the bridge!"

On and on went Tom, and on and on went the chestnuts.

Suddenly, as if the echo of Duncan's cry travelled with the wind and reached Tom, he remembered the bridge spanning the river — a spot so terrible, for some unknown cause, to the chestnuts, that they never crossed it without great excitement and much urging.

"The bridge! the bridge!" said Tom, as he urged poor Veda on her way.

A little rise in the roadway, another turn, and the bridge was in sight.

Could Tom believe his eyes? The buggy had crossed in safety, and just beyond, so far away that the microscopic power of love could alone discern it, was the little figure of a boy with golden hair, still standing erect, as the excited horses dashed on.

"Faster, Veda, faster," cried Tom, and the little mare leaped forward at the sound of his voice.

He had never ridden her before; indeed he had rallied Bessie on her fondness for the sedate little creature; now he patted her neck and called her, as she indeed was, a treasure.

Faster and faster, over another bridge, under the railroad, down by the river-bank, and there Tom saw something which made him forget all the world beside, for little Dick was safe, and stood like a conqueror by the side of the steaming horses.

Tom caught the boy in his arms and sank down upon the ground, hearing nothing, knowing nothing, save that the child was his once more.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OUR HERO.

WHEN Tom Sylvester became conscious of passing events, he found a group of men busily engaged in rubbing down his horses, and Dick still nestling in his arms.

Some one — perhaps one of the women near, with tired, seamed faces, but tender of heart — had given Tom a glass of raspberry cordial, some "made years before;" and some one else had brought a handkerchief, wet from the river, to wipe his brow; while still another was saying, "Those brutes know as much as folks."

Brutes! Could Tom ever permit them to be called that after this morning's work?

He was strangely jaded, and miserably weak. It must be the result of trying to travel as fast as one's thoughts. And there was Dick in his arms, with flushed face, and a strange whiteness about the lips, — his boy, his one darling, and safe. Somehow he must tell Bessie.

"Can you send a telegram from here?" asked Tom of a man who was devoting himself to Veda.

"Yes, you kin, by riding as far as the Corners;

but it won't take you long to go yourself, if you ride as you did comin' up."

Tom put Dick down and attempted to rise. As he did so, he held the child's hand in his. The boy hastily withdrew it, with:—

"Don't, papa; please don't. It's sore. You see, they pulled hard; and I wouldn't let them go into the river. I could hold them, if a baby could."

Tom looked down. Yes, both little hands were destitute of skin, from palm to finger-tips; but not a tear escaped the child.

Again the women hurried for remedies, and soon both hands were bandaged, while the boy looked about upon the group, thinking his own thoughts, in his own way.

"How far is it from here to Brookford?" asked Tom.

"Strong nine miles, sir, by the way your horses took. You see, they turned sharp to the right down by the Junction; and that's what saved him."

"Better say his guardian angel watched over him," said a woman. "When I see him strike the river road, I shut my eyes and prayed. It was all you could do."

"Much good your prayers would 'a' done, Hannah, ef the little chap hadn't reel old Andrew Jackson grit. Why, them horses knew they had a master, ef he warn't no bigger'n a bumble-bee."

"Well, I reckon his marm 'll hev to take care of his hands a spell," was the response. "Praying is a

comfort, sometimes; but nothing short of good Balm of Gilead salve will cure them."

This simple talk pleased Tom, and gave him time to recover his wits and spirits.

Veda was too much exhausted to return at once; and Tom decided to drive back with his boy. So they went their way, after many kind words, and some exchange of coin; for Tom Sylvester could never forget the homely kindness of these honest people.

Later in the day, one of the farmers brought Veda home; and, when he returned at nightfall to his wife and little ones, he was heard to say: —

"I tell you what it is, I felt kind of touched when the gentleman took me right in among his folks; and the little fellow sat there on a satin sofy, with both his hands tied up. His ma, she said she wanted me to tell her every word, 'cause I'd seen him first. And so we went into another room, where a grandma and a judge was; and I told 'em how I see him a coming like mad, and I didn't dares't to stir, for fear they would throw him out, and how they made for the river at last, and how that little chap knelt right down on his knees, and held 'em like a major until I come up and took 'em by the head, and Joe Lacey lifted the boy out.

"'Dear me!' says the boy's ma; 'we never looked at his knees.' So we all went back to the keepin'-room, where he was lyin', or sittin', I forget which; and I hope to die if them poor little legs and knees warn't jest as black as my shoe! He

hadn't spoken a word about 'em; but it wasn't many minutes before we had 'em done up; and, if he walks in a week's time, it'll be as much as he can do.

"I never see better grit. As I cum along, I stopped at the washerwoman's where I take pertaters once a week, and she was speakin' about it. She says he's got a sort of a bad name; but he's terrible kind-hearted and good. And, says she, 'They call him That Dreadful Boy round here'; and I sez: 'Well, I reckon he'll come to somethin', anyway. And, for my part, I want to watch him. You see, he's got grit and go in him; and, for my part, I've taken a terrible shine to him. Dreadful boy, or no dreadful, I kind of hated to say good-by to him."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A THEOLOGICAL KITE.

WHEN Tom Sylvester recovered from his dazed condition, caused by the long exciting race after his child, he remembered that changes were impending, and it was not long before his mother sought him, and laid before him the proposal of Mr. Livingston.

"If you object, or if you think it will interfere with your happiness either now or in the future, I shall at once decline his proposal," said Mrs. Sylvester.

"No, you will not," interrupted Tom, eagerly; "I must be set aside at once. In fact, I protest against being considered in the matter; your happiness is of the first importance."

"I have made yours first ever since your birth, my dear," said Tom's mother, with a little sigh.

"I know that quite too well, but Livingston will be very kind and considerate — and — and" Tom hesitated a little; after all, it would be hard to see his mother bound by the strongest ties to some one beside himself, and yet Tom mentally determined that his feelings were of no consequence, and he would cudgel himself before he would permit that demon, self, to get the upper hand.

Mrs. Sylvester read the thoughts he did not utter.

"Tom dear," she said, as she held his hand in hers, and looked in his clear, true eyes, "this man, your friend and mine, loved me in the long ago; I was his first choice, and yet I refused him, because I loved your father. How true and good Mr. Livingston has been as a husband and father, we both know; but until this week I never dreamed that the early days still lived in his memory. He is now in the prime of life, honored and gifted, and yet lonely, and oftentimes weary; his daughters are going from him, and he thinks that my presence will make his home, not the gay, cheerful place it once was, but a quiet haven where two heads will prove better than one, and where two hearts will always find welcome for the children and children's children. One word from you will make my decision final, for, through all the coming years, your happiness will be my first consideration, as you have been my greatest comfort."

Tom's eyes were moist as he held her face between his hands, and kissed her tenderly.

"Blessed little mother!" he said, "there is not in all the wide world a man worthy of you; but the judge has been like a father to me, and Tom Sylvester is not the man to interfere with his present or prospective happiness."

Thus it was settled.

Dick was in high spirits when he found that grandma, his "pretty grandma," as he was fond of calling her, was about to marry the dear old judge;

and when it was decided that the old Livingston mansion should be put in complete order to receive its new mistress, and Dick would be permitted not only to make suggestions concerning his room therein, but actually to select the furniture, inasmuch as it would often be his home when he arrived at the happy age when he could attend school in town, the boy was jubilant.

With a room at the cottage in Newport and another in Boston, Dick began to think himself a very fortunate individual, and one morning, while carpenters, plasterers, and painters were busy, the boy was heard expatiating upon his future prospects.

"You see, Rob," he said to his old companion in misfortune, "the first you know I will be grown up, and when I am in college I can live sometimes at grandma's and sometimes at home."

"What do you want to go to college for?" asked Rob; "I won't."

"Well, you'd better; for Skim says it don't matter much what you do in college, if your mothers, and sisters, and the folks who like to talk about you, can say, 'Oh, he went to college—' "

"I won't go, all the same," said Rob, emphatically, "'cause my uncle Rob did, and he got his finger mashed rowing, and one eye almost put out playing baseball, and he had no end of rows with the fellows."

"Didn't he study?" asked Dick. "My papa used to study; for Smiley says so, and Smiley did too."

"That was in old times, you see," said Rob, the wise. "I suppose the judge studied, and all those old fellows. It isn't the fashion now."

"Papa is not an old fellow," said Dick.

"No, not so very old," responded Rob, who looked upon a man of forty as an octogenarian; "but you see it is all different now. I've heard Uncle Will tell about it; they used to think it was nice to look thin and get your eyes bad, or go into consumption, and be a good scholar, but that is all played out, and now they have boat-crews and 'nines' and 'teams,' and real fights sometimes, and not so much study and Greek and Latin."

Dick was sober for a few moments, and then his thought was expressed in the announcement that he meant to ask the judge.

"Ask him what?" said Rob.

"Ask him if it was the ball, or the rowing, or the study, that made him know so much."

"He won't understand," said Rob, confidently; "he is one of the old fellows, only he didn't die in consumption or grow blind, — he was too tough."

This wise conversation concerning college training was interrupted by the appearance of a workman, who was sent to inquire where Mr. Dick would like his book-shelves placed.

As the young gentleman's literary tastes were still quite undeveloped, and his number of books unusually large, it was a matter of some moment.

"I shall only keep a few in town," he said to Rob, "and then I can buy new ones when I want them."

"Don't forget Gulliver," said Rob, "or Grimm, for they seem new all the time, when your mother reads them, and Mr. Smiley just makes them talk."

"Mr. Smiley will not be here," said Dick, with dignity; "when I am in town I shall not need a tutor."

Dick's remark was overheard by Mr. Smiley himself, who was also interested in the matter of bookshelves, and was not a little amused when Dick said, in a patronizing tone: —

"You can manage the books, Mr. Smiley, for Rob and I are going up into the garret."

Two hours later, the boys were seen flying a kite from the high fence surrounding the small enclosure called by courtesy Judge Livingston's garden. The materials for the frame had been cheerfully supplied by the workmen; and as it rose higher and higher above the brick walls and surrounding chimney-pots, the boys started a cheer, which was echoed not only by the boys on the street, but also by the smiling judge, who stood in the doorway, beaming upon the world in general and the lads in particular.

"What did you make that of, major?" asked the judge, as Dick turned his bright face toward him.

"Of some old papers we found in your attic."

"In a barrel," shouted Rob.

"Old papers in a barrel! Good heavens, Smiley! they have been cutting up my grandfather's sermons. It is enough to make the rigid old doctor of divinity rise in his grave. They were biting productions, I assure you, and strong on everlasting torture.

Dick, Dick, you young rascal, dow dared you tamper with such sacred things?"

The judge was laughing while he chided, and, when Mr. Smiley quietly suggested that for once the doctrine was sent higher than a kite, and he wondered how such weighty words could career in such light fashion, the genial judge laughed harder than ever, and declared that the boys were not the first ones to manufacture a theological kite, or to throw dogmas to the wind. As for Dick, he was speedily forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A GROOMSMAN'S TRIALS.

Is there anything more sacredly tender than a wedding where the contracting parties have been chastened by sorrow and subdued by experience? Surely not. The gay girl bride gives her soft, young hand, after her heart is no longer hers, and, in her innocence and almost pitiful ignorance, thinks her lover the embodiment of all that is noble, generous, beautiful, manly, and true. The bride of riper years knows that life has its trials and discouragements; that men, as well as women, are faulty, and that the adorer of her youth, who could go supperless to bed for the sake of a moonlight stroll in her society, may become the exacting husband who growls about his coffee, and finds the text for a seventeenthly domestic sermon if his slumbers are disturbed. A married woman never looks upon a girlish bride without a heartache, even while she admits all the sacredness of new love, all the beauty of youth and hope, and perchance the brilliant prospects for the future.

Your matron knows, as no man ever can, save by imperfect telling, that the roses of love are beset

with thorns, and the tenderest or most robust affection cannot turn them from the woman's pathway. Contact with the world outside, immersion in business, face-to-face encounters with concrete humanity, give to the husband the variety which his bride cannot find in her home-life. A wise woman treads the thorns under her feet, and grows sweeter, tenderer, and more beautiful as the years roll on; weak women become morbid, fanciful, fretful, and discouraged. The dearest lovers in the world are married lovers, the truest friends husband and wife, when the marriage is union in its highest sense.

Bessie Sylvester said something of this kind to Tom, as they sat one night planning some surprises for his mother — some pretty additions to the new old home.

Tom had brought home a new magazine, intending to read aloud; but it was infinitely pleasanter to watch Bessie as she plaited some lace for her wedding-gown, which she would wear again on the morrow.

Bessie's scissors had fallen once or twice, as they are apt to do when one is working with nervous haste; and Tom had captured them, and returned them to her with as much grace and courtesy as distinguished him in his happy days of courtship.

When Bessie thanked Tom, the conversation naturally drifted toward courtesy in married life, concluding with Mrs. Bessie's remark that the dearest lovers in the world were married lovers.

"You women are to blame," said Tom, "if we

grow careless. You let us do things we might well be ashamed of; and we go on doing worse and worse. I never could see why a man should keep the best chair in the room when his wife enters, and offer it to the next woman who comes in; and I do not think it is necessary for a man to carry an umbrella or package for a pretty girl on the street, and permit his wife or mother to trudge by his side quite overburdened. If you find me growing careless, I will thank you for a reminder in the shape of a snub."

"Then I should need reproof," laughed Bessie. "But, seriously, I intend to keep you well in order. My opera-cloak is not a whit heavier than the one I wore before we were married; and you can place it on my shoulders as gracefully, if you choose, and you must choose."

"I plead guilty," laughed Tom. "I remember now, you came down while I was reading, and I never looked up until Smiley had reproved me by offering his services. I won't transgress again if I can help it."

"You see," said Bessie, "we began with an earnest desire to be a very model couple, and, all things considered, we have managed pretty well. Now, if I once permit any one to offer me an attention which is your right and duty, —"

"Pleasure," interrupted Tom.

"Your right, duty, and pleasure, — why, then I have taken the first step toward making you careless and indifferent."

"Precisely," said Tom; "and if you become so, it will be my fault, and the boy will not have the perfect training and example we desire."

"Making due allowance for poor human nature," said Bessie, as she patted the frill, and looked admiringly at her work.

Then the conversation turned upon the what to wear at the wedding, on flowers and gloves, and the possibility of Mr. Scrimmager's wearing the new suit presented by Tom for the occasion, and, these important questions being settled, Bessie discovered that it was bedtime and Tom had not read one word.

The next day was appointed for the wedding, and the pretty villa fairly blossomed, for the young people insisted that the ceremony should take place under their roof, and neither the judge nor Tom's mother should be burdened with any thought of preparation.

Early in the day the caterers came from town and took possession, while Mrs. Bessie flitted about, mingling pleasant speeches with her orders to her own servants.

"It is far nicer to attend another party's wedding," she said. "Why, I can enjoy it all perfectly; dear mamma is so resignedly sweet and proper, and the judge so happy and triumphant, and the caterer so all-important and great; it is genuine fun, especially as there is no future to worry about. The judge will never grow frisky or dissipated, mamma will not be obliged to sit up for him nights, and the whole thing settles itself. I am delighted with it all."

So was Tom; and the boy came in for his share of

pleasure and amusement. He examined the dress of the waiters, peered under covers of dishes, peeped into ice-cream freezers, and nibbled at cake, although it was a wedding breakfast.

Rob the ubiquitous was with him; Rob, whose chief misery consisted in not having a grandma who was young and handsome enough to marry.

The boys were forgotten after Dick's toilet had received the finishing touches, for Mrs. Bessie had bidden him run away while she was assisting the bride.

"Remember," she said, as she kissed the handsome, piquant face of the boy, "remember you are to be the only groomsman, and your velvet suit must be spotless."

"I'll remember," said Dick; "I wouldn't miss it for anything. You see grandma will never get married again, and Rob is mad 'cause he can't have a wedding; but he can't, for his grandma is over seventy, and her face is puckery."

So Dick went away with Rob, who seemed much pleased with all his surroundings, despite his "mad" condition.

Alas, for motherly instructions! Alas, for fatherly pride! When the clergyman came and the guests were assembled, the little groomsman could not be found.

Servants sought him everywhere. Skim, followed by Mr. Smiley, examined carriage-house and barn, and at last Bessie went out from her guests, trailing her white dress up the staircase. The boy must be

found; perhaps he was in her room, where no one had ventured.

The usual breakfast hour had long been delayed, and Dick's hungry stomach cried a prompt amen to Rob's proposal that they should taste of every dish on the table,—a feat they succeeded in accomplishing, despite the muttered wrath of the waiters and the reproofs of the pompous chef.

As Bessie entered her room, she saw her young son limp and prostrate on the bed; remonstrance was useless, and relief necessary, so it chanced that faithful Skim remained with the boy, while Tom and his wife stood with the stately bride during the ceremony.

Dick, in great agony of mind as well as body, heard the sounds of merriment below, and bewailed his fate. After all, he was not groomsman, and now Rob would laugh.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PRESENT MISERY AND FUTURE BLISS.

TOM SYLVESTER'S vexation was never assumed. He was angry with Dick, and declared positively that the boy must be punished.

"Think of it!" said he. "To make a little glutton of himself is bad enough, but to grieve his kind grandma and create a sensation at such a time is worse; I must give him a lesson to make him remember."

Tom said this *sotto voce* to Mrs. Bessie, who was already anxious enough, for the guests must be served, and between the rattle of plates and glass, and a buzz of conversation, she could hear distinctly a smothered groan, audible only to her mother's ear.

When the judge and his bride drove away at last, amid the chorus of good wishes and showers of rice, Tom found time to look after his son and heir. Bessie went with him as a matter of precaution. At the top of the stairs, Bessie laid her hand on her husband's arm, saying, in an expostulatory tone:—

"Remember you were a boy once."

"Certainly," responded Tom, "but a boy need not be an everlasting nuisance; he needn't play the volcano and blow up our plans in this fashion. There is reason in all things."

Bessie sighed as she answered: —

"The average boy reasons very little, — almost as little as a grown man exercises his patience when his plans are frustrated."

It was one of the rules of the family that neither parent should object to any decision made by the other in the presence of the boy. This method, excellent as it was, involved some nice points, for careless Tom had not yet learned to guard his tongue, and Bessie's Masonic signs were not always observed by him.

Blessed is the woman whose husband reads her sign-manual without words; fortunate, indeed, when emergencies arise.

When Tom opened the door and saw young Dick looking white and wretched, his anger fled like the dew of the morning, and Bessie knew her boy was quite safe.

"I am very sorry, papa," said Dick, with a suspicious twitching about the mouth, "and — and — "

"How came you to forget yourself at such a time?" asked Tom, trying to be stern and proper.

"I didn't know," said Dick. "You see, Rob said he would bet me that I couldn't eat as much as he could, and I told him mamma did not approve of betting, and he said if I did he would give me his new Japanese kite, and so I tried, but the salads were the worst, and I ate so fast for fear the minister would come, and I said I wouldn't and couldn't and shouldn't be sick, and then I grew chilly and dizzy, and I came up here."

Tom's kind heart was touched, but parental dignity must be maintained.

"I am sorry that our little son should miss the first wedding that he was ever invited to."

Dick's lips quivered a little, and his eyes were moist; but soon the old spirit reigned, for he said quickly: —

"Never mind, pa, I will go to my own."

Tom looked at Bessie. The Masonic or matrimonial signal plainly said, "Don't laugh," but Tom's face was already wreathed in smiles, and his heart gave a quick throb of sympathy for the little chap who could find a bright future beyond his present misery.

"Dick," said Tom, with assumed gravity, "don't you think it is a little doubtful about your wedding, if you continue to experiment on yourself in this fashion?"

Dick was silent.

"You see," said Tom, "that it is a tremendous task for Nature; she is doing her best for you, while you are growing fast, and a little circus performance of this kind increases her labors; if you could manage to obey a few of her laws, you might get on better."

Dick looked at his mother; whenever his father talked half seriously, Dick needed her for interpreter.

"Your father means," said Bessie, "that our bodies are to be respected and cared for. If we neglect to do this, some punishment is sure to follow."

"You may punish me all you like, pa; I couldn't feel worse than I do," said Dick, "'specially when I think of grandma being gone and the fun all over, and how hateful the boys will be when Rob goes and tells. I know he will go and tell; he always does, and—"

Dick's eyes were closed to hide some tears he was too proud to shed, whereupon Tom remarked that boys were dirty little rascals generally, and fond of tormenting each other. Bessie, without any signal whatever, said, kindly:—

"You are punished enough now, dear; we should be very cruel to add to your misery, for you will always regret it, and, as soon as you can, you must write a long letter to grandma and the judge, asking them to forgive you."

As far as his parents were concerned, Dick knew that punishment was over; but the boys were still to be encountered, and only a boy knows how much that means when a partner in wrong-doing is the first to expose his wickedness to others.

Thanks to Bessie's wise counsel, Dick was quite prepared to meet any taunts or sneers when he was once more able to join his mates.

The boy who urges others to do wrong, and then turns informer, may win a few followers, but never true friends. Poor humanity is weak enough, and foolish enough, even stupid enough; but it well knows true coin from spurious, and the boy who is laughed at often becomes the man who is honored above his fellows.

Dick passed his ordeal successfully, and told his sorrows to his mother in private. He was not quite happy, however, until he received a long letter from the judge, telling him that he did something of the kind himself in his youthful days, and the kindest of notes from his grandma, containing her full and free pardon, signed with a bank note for pocket money.

The memory of the wedding-day served to keep Dick in order for some weeks; but boy nature must have its periodical outbursts, and Bessie comforted herself with the reflection that every day Dick grew wiser as well as older.

Tom still planned many things for his son, and out of business hours amused his wife by laying them before her.

"I think we shall get on famously with him now," said Tom. "You see he is growing fast, and his good nature will get him into scrapes, but the chap has a conscience and pride; given these, with ordinary care, I think we can make a man of him."

"I hope so," said Bessie, earnestly; "but we have known fathers and mothers who have suffered keenly after doing their best for sons and daughters."

Tom knew she was thinking of her brother, and he also knew that men who are proverbially good at solving humanity's problems when the problems do not include the home circle, openly said, "That Lennox Winthrop was driven on in his reckless course by his father's undue severity and harsh reproofs." If this was the truth, no one could regret it more

than the paralytic old man who worshipped Tom's boy.

While Tom and his wife were still discussing various methods of discipline, and endeavoring to find a mean between extremes, Grandpa Winthrop was dictating the following letter: —

"DEAR LITTLE MAN, — We have a nice nest here among the Berkshire hills. This small farm was so cheap I bought it, and have a man to take care of it. They tell me September is very fine here, and I am beginning to think so, after our summer at Newport. Tell your father to put you on the cars in Boston, at the Fitchburg depot, and come with thick wraps, prepared to stay until Thanksgiving.

"Your devoted GRANDPA WINTHROP."

CHAPTER XXXV.

DICK AS A CORRESPONDENT.

WHEN this brief note arrived, Dick was sitting by his mother's side, engaged in translating Latin phrases into English. The boy's lessons with his mother proved extremely fatiguing to her, but delightful to him. His other studies were supposed to progress in school, but Latin was disagreeable to him until his mother made it fascinating, and English composition, although a portion of the routine drill, received very little attention.

Mr. Smiley was heard to say that it received far too little in all public schools, a few lines on paper, often receiving zero or ten, according to the teacher's mood or time; while ideas and graceful expression were considered of less value than penmanship. "Nowadays," he said to Mrs. Sylvester, "the schoolboy's composition is too often like your publisher's books, — praised for the outside appearance."

"You cannot expect perfection," said Bessie; "and I shall defend the overworked teachers. If the school boards would adopt the old academy system of rating composition, and would consent to some valuation of simple, concise expression,

it would be well. I prefer originality in ideas rather than a written task, which the child looks upon with dread. Let him tell his story in his own way, and then, if need be, show him a better one. Children should not dislike to write; and they would not if we were careful to make it the pleasure it undoubtedly is. I want Dick to enjoy composition."

"Teach him yourself, then, my dear," said Tom. "You are quite equal to it; and if you succeed in getting him to put his ideas on paper without urging or reproof, you will do more than my instructors. Smiley says the boy lacks application. He is too restless to sit down and polish his thought."

Bessie determined to try. All summer, when a drive or sail was taken, Dick was requested to describe it on paper, while his mother would do the same.

"It is astonishing," said Bessie one day, "quite amusing, in fact, to note the different impressions caused by the same thing seen with different eyes. Dick went with me to see the wreck of the bark *Susan;* and on our return, I proposed that we each should spend thirty minutes in writing down a description of it. Dick filled two pages of foolscap, in boyish, ornate style, and never thought of it as a task; while I wrote for his sake, and, indeed, saw for him."

"I hope you will keep both," said Tom; "but I question your power if the boy goes from home. Boys will not write letters if it can be avoided; and

all your most successful wiles will not keep him from finding it a bore if he leaves you."

"Oh, dear!" said Bessie; "how you discourage one! Now, I think my Dick will enjoy writing to me, and will find dozens of things to write about."

"Great is thy faith, little woman; but we shall see. The mother usually receives business notes and brief statements; later on, the sweetheart pores over her four and five daily pages, while the mother folds her half-sheet, closing with the words, 'It is very dull here; absolutely nothing to write about.'"

"I will not hear another word," responded Bessie; "you slander your sex. I know boys and young men so true, so thoughtful, and so grateful, that a dozen sweethearts could not make them neglectful or careless. No new love could make the sacred mother's love less dear."

"Heaven grant you may find it so, sweet wife; for the mother in your heart deserves perpetual, unfading love and gratitude."

Dick was allowed to accept the invitation to Montclair; and in a few days he entered the cars at the Fitchburg station, filled with a sense of his own importance, and a bountiful breakfast. He quite scorned the idea of being placed under the conductor's care, and was much relieved when he found that his father would not be able to leave his business to accompany him.

Claude was fond of relating his experiences when he was sent by express to New York; but going

away up to the Hoosac Tunnel, and then riding up a mountain, was a feat much more wonderful than being ticketed through.

As the train moved away, Tom waved his hand to the boy, who responded by taking off his cap, and then settled down to examine a pictorial paper, and nibble candy from his plethoric pockets. When he tired of the former, and ceased from the latter because the supply was exhausted, he began to examine his travelling companions, and suddenly discovered that a pretty little girl with yellow hair was looking at him; in fact, she had been occupied in that manner ever since the train started. Was it the paper, the boy, or the candy? Dick did not know. He was sorry he had eaten the last chocolate, and he wished he could tell what she was whispering to her mother.

After some silent messages were exchanged, which the young people seemed to understand and the matron to approve, Dick ventured to offer his paper, which was politely accepted; and soon a conversation ensued which was extremely pleasant, as the lady proved to be a Mrs. Ridgeway, who was at one time a schoolmate of Dick's mother.

When the train reached Montclair, Dick was sorry to part with his new friends, but his feet had not touched the platform of the little station before he was rejoiced to see Grandma Winthrop smiling her welcome, while grandpa's face was visible through the open door of a carriage beyond.

"Here you are, my darling," said grandma, "and

you must be quite worn out with your long drive. Grandpa sits in the carriage waiting for us, and you cannot think how he has improved since we came here."

So Dick was hurried away, while grandma went to the little ticket-office and telegraphed: —

"Dick safe and all well."

"You must write home in the morning, my love," said grandma, "or mamma will be anxious."

"Oh, yes," said Dick, "I will; I have the loveliest portfolio in my trunk, and all sorts of pretty paper."

In the morning Dick was out before breakfast looking about, and after breakfast he drove around the farm and down by the pond with grandma and grandpa until lunch; after lunch he went to Vertville to buy a new girth for an old saddle, that he might ride the next day, and after Vertville came dinner and the early September evening, when he played games with grandpa and fell asleep while grandma read the book reviews aloud.

In the morning, when grandma's letter went into Boston, Dick was three miles away in the woods with the farmer's boys, and grandma's postscript was poor consolation to the loving little mother in Boston. When night came again, the unwonted exercise, the cool air, and boy nature triumphed, and Dick fell asleep soon after the evening lamp was lighted. The next day brought letters from home, with a postscript from Tom, saying: —

"If you do not write regularly to your mother,

you are unworthy of her love and care — remember."

This surprised Dick. No, he had not written; he had fully intended to, and there was ever so much to tell; it would take a month to write it all, and perhaps he'd better wait until he saw his mother. It would only be a few weeks any way; he would write now a few lines, though.

After shutting himself in his room, where, do what he would, every turkey and chicken on the farm tried to disturb him, and Jack, the hired man, called out under the windows, the boy produced the following:

"DEAREST MOTHER IN THE WORLD — It is a boss place up here, and grandpa's farm is the prettiest one in the county; I am having a good time, have caught four trout and a pug dog; grandpa gave me the dog. There's a fellow here that knows more Latin than I do; he studies alone and goes barefooted; he means to be a doctor. We have new butter all the time, and I ride to the village every day for the mail, except when I forget and go a-fishing or a-nutting. I've got a calf with a white nose, and some chickens, and one lamb; grandpa gave them to me for my own, and I mean to be a stock razer; stock razers make lots of money; Jake's brother, out West, is one, and he's awful rich. I forgot to tell you about the little girl in the cars; her mother went to school with you, and her name begins with R. I forgot the rest of it; they were very kind. I will tell you some more when I get home. Please let me stay until grandpa

and grandma go, for I want to see it snow up here, and Jake's a-going to make me a double-runner. There he goes down to the brook. Good-by.

"Your loving DICK."

Bessie sighed a little as she read this missive, and Tom hastened to say that boys as an investment were rather uncertain. He kindly refrained from mentioning English composition.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DICK FALLS IN LOVE.

AFTER Dick's letter was folded and sent, he gave himself up to pleasure. It seemed to him that the sky was never so blue before, the air never so sweet, or the days so short. Grandma Winthrop saw him only at the table or in the evening, and her gentle remonstrances were silenced by Grandpa Winthrop, who declared that the boy was improving every day, and his liberty should not be tampered with.

English composition, letter-writing, and books were almost forgotten, as Dick assisted in harvesting the fall crops with Jake, or roamed in the woods with the chore boy on the farm. Sometimes when he tired of putting the golden squashes into piles, or found his fingers growing clumsy as he held the fishing-rod, he would wander back to the little school-house where the country children were assembled, and sit in the glorious sunshine, waiting for the appearance of his new friend, the Latin scholar.

One day the teacher invited him in, and Dick went, to find himself perched on a chair where the grand visitors, like the school committee, always sat, close by the teacher's own desk. This teacher was a new

revelation to Dick; just sixteen, with pretty face and petite figure, she seemed to his boyish imagination a very wonder. There she stood and smiled upon her pupils, or patiently explained their tasks, while Dick never grew weary of watching the color come and go in her cheeks as the dimples came and went.

Yes, she was very pretty, and, the Latin scholar said, very good. She was an orphan, and knew more than any teacher they had ever found, and, besides, she never "licked the boys." No, sir; she had put the ruler into her desk and said, "Now, boys, if it comes out again it will be your fault, not mine." It hadn't come out, and the fall term was getting on fast; if it never did come out to beat a boy, she would be the first one in that district who could get on without it.

The more Dick heard about pretty Miss Graham, the better he liked her; and when she talked with him about his studies, and said it was so pleasant to find some one who knew some of her favorite authors, Dick began to think her the very prettiest as well as nicest girl he ever saw, and she was only a few years older than himself, after all.

Day after day Dick went to the schoolhouse and waited until the session was over, when he would carry Miss Graham's basket as far as the crossroads, and go home over the fields, thinking of her prettiness and goodness.

At her boarding-place, Miss Graham spoke frequently of the charming little boy from Boston, who

was a gentleman in manners and a fine scholar for his years.

A little boy, indeed! Dick felt every inch a man, and surprised his grandpa by asking for the old gentleman's carriage, that he might drive Miss Graham to Vertville on Saturday.

"And who is Miss Graham, pray?" asked grandpa.

What a simple question, and yet it called forth a reply as long as the story of a book-pedler, for all her virtues were dwelt upon and described with such eloquence that Grandpa and Grandma Winthrop decided at once that Miss Graham must be invited to the house forthwith, and grandma even denounced herself for not thinking of it before, when the poor young thing had been sitting over there in the red schoolhouse eating her solitary cold dinner.

"Why, pa," she said, "it might have been our own Bessie."

"Yes," said pa, "but it isn't, thank Heaven!"

So Miss Graham was duly invited, and, although she found Mrs. Winthrop a little formal and somewhat patronizing, she did not seem to mind it at all, and cheerfully played chess with the old gentleman, or read aloud to him.

In the city and at Newport grandma had employed a reader, but here in the country she had wearied herself day after day lest her husband should find time hang heavy on his hands. He never had, poor man, and he was sublimely unconscious of weariness on her part. The self-sacrificing missionaries in many a household are overlooked.

Miss Graham came and conquered, and after that no more cold dinners were eaten in the schoolhouse, and no more lonely Sundays were spent in Miss Dabney's best room.

Dick was happy. It did not matter that Jake teased him and the chore boy laughed, — he adored Miss Graham, and every day she seemed to him more and more beautiful. About this time he wrote the following to his mother: —

"DEAREST MOTHER, — I wish you knew Miss Graham; she is staying here with us now, and grandpa likes her very much. She has gray eyes and brown hair and dimples and rosy cheeks, and her father died when she was six, and her mother last summer; and she wears black, which is awfully becoming, and she is all alone in the world, except her uncle, who lives up here and got her the school. He says she must shift for herself, 'cause he has enough of his own. She reads aloud every night to grandpa, and her school closes pretty soon, and I want you to ask her to come to Boston, and live with us. She has been teaching me to paint golden-rod, but she is prettier than any flower. Please write and let me know if she can come. DICK."

When Tom Sylvester read this letter, he smiled, and asked his wife her present opinion of their son as a correspondent.

"Never mind," said Bessie, "he has shown us that he is not selfish."

"Selfish!" said Tom. "Why, my dear, he will adopt all the forlorn females in the world, if we will permit, not to mention wounded dogs, cats, birds, and creeping things; the truth is, the boy has followed the example of many wise yet foolish creatures of his own sex, and has fallen in love with some one a dozen years older than himself."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Bessie.

"True, good wife; all boys understand it. There is Smiley, for instance, — when he was a little chap, he worshipped the girl with candlestick curls who sat next him at some infant school. I think the poor fellow went without a lunch every day for a week, in order to double her portion. You should hear Smiley tell the story."

"Dick is a mere child," remonstrated Bessie.

"True, but children have their fancies; and I remember that I once thought the little daughter of our cook a raving beauty, although I discovered when I reached my eleventh year that her eyes squinted and her nose was the puggest of pugs."

"Having enriched yourself by experience, what would you advise in this case? If she is a worthy young lady, she needs a counsellor and friend at times, all the more if she be as pretty as our Dick thinks."

"Better advise your mother to retain her in her family, and quietly watch your boy," said Dick. "The disease is not incurable in Dick's case."

Bessie wrote her mother telling her that intelligent service was hard to be obtained, a fact already

well known to Mrs. Winthrop, and also that it would perhaps be kind as well as wise to keep Miss Graham in her family when she returned to town; to Dick, his mother said she was glad to know he had found a friend wiser and older than himself, and yet young enough to enjoy his boyish sports."

Miss Graham, who knew nothing of this correspondence, had views and plans of her own, and one moonlight night there appeared on the scene a young farmer from his distant home among the hills, who was received kindly, and went away thanking Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop for their kindness to Miss Graham, who would some day come to him as his wife. Both were young, and time would increase his fortune.

This pleased the young girl's new friends, especially when they found the young man to be every way worthy; but Dick's indignation was great, and, as the visits of the young farmer became frequent, Dick found himself planning various tricks calculated to annoy him. In this work he discovered an able assistant in the person of the chore boy.

The golden rule of conduct which Mrs. Bessie had labored so diligently to impress on her young son was forgotten for the time, and mischief ruled.

One night the farmer missed his bridle; another, his saddle had been spirited away, and once the horse was turned loose in a distant pasture. All this was the merest sport to the chore boy. To Dick, it savored of revenge.

It is so hard in life to renounce the thing we covet,

so difficult to yield gracefully one present pleasure; later on, we learn that the renunciation brings greater pleasure to us out of the unseen future.

One morning Miss Graham came to Dick with a sad look in her eyes, and, in the kindest, pleasantest voice in the world, asked him to be merciful and gracious to one who had been her own and her mother's friend.

"I could not tell you half his kindness," she said, "and it wounds me to have him annoyed."

Dick, true to the family tradition, and true to the instructions of the little mother at home, frankly begged her pardon; and more, for he told the young farmer that he would not be guilty of further mischief, and he even assisted him as he took his leave, although it cut him to the heart to witness the tender farewell.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WIDOW LECKY'S PIG.

UNDER the old barn on Grandpa Winthrop's place lived a numerous family of pigs, — at least, Dave, the chore boy, called them so, although some of them had reached beyond that giddy period, and were well weighted with flesh, if not with years. These creatures, once so sleek, and white, and innocent, were now rejoicing in their might and mire, little dreaming that they were destined soon to sizzle in some pot of baked beans, or figure as spare-ribs.

Dick enjoyed this family, and paid them frequent visits. They were as great a curiosity to this city-bred boy as a ballet dance to cousin John, fresh from the backwoods.

His grandpa was greatly amused by the boy's questions, and his observations concerning their habits, and, much to Dick's delight, bade him select for himself one of the ten as his own.

Dick did so, after long consultations with Jake; and every day thereafter his new property was visited, fed, and petted.

For his comfort and happiness, Dick procured an old curry-comb, and spent some portion of each day

in brushing and combing his porkship, who rewarded him with prolonged grunts, and followed him about like a dog.

One day during Dick's wanderings he found a poor woman, in a lonely house, some distance from the highway, whose present grief was the loss of her solitary porker.

"She has hard luck," said Jake, who was the boy's companion; "she's a 'Tartar,' anyway; but I hate to see a woman have it so all-fired hard. Last year her barn was burned down, and this year, just as she was going to make something by selling her pig, it was taken sick and died; she thinks some one poisoned it, but they didn't; it is her luck."

Dick had seen the woman but a moment, while she stood in her doorway chatting with Jake, but her story touched his heart. All the way home he thought of the widow Lecky, and long after he nestled in bed.

"I'll do it," said Dick, the next morning; "I'll do it, and no one but grandpa need know."

The next morning, at breakfast, Dick asked, somewhat abruptly, if his grandpa had given him his pig for his very own, to do with as he pleased?

"Certainly," said grandpa, "a gift is a gift; you can kill it, sell it, give it away, or keep it, as you choose."

"Thank you," said Dick; "I do not think I shall kill it."

For two days Dick held long conversations with Dave, and the boys were seen to go down the river

bank, bearing with them pieces of board, hammers, nails, etc.

"Are you building a raft?" asked grandpa, who was very curious, but unable to get down the steep embankment.

"Yes, sir; we are trying to."

"Well, do not launch it; at least, do not go upon it until Jake has tested it, — and he knows just how far the river is safe."

"All right, sir," responded Dick; "we will be careful."

When the raft was complete, Jake himself shoved it off, and gave the boys some instructions concerning the rapids, sunken rocks, and deepest places.

"Let her drift most anywhere around here," said Jake; "but be very careful about the pool. You couldn't get on very well there without oars; and, now I think of it, there's an old pair in the shed, which you might take, in case you should need them."

That night, when all was still, two figures were seen stealing down toward the barn. One of them approached the pig-pen with a tempting pan of mush, while the other climbed over and fastened an old halter about the neck of a fine large porker.

"Don't frighten him, Dave," whispered the smaller boy. "He will follow me; only get him out first, without waking up the rest."

Strange to say, the stupid animal promptly followed his young owner without further noise than an occasional subdued grunt.

"That's owing to the pan of bran mush," said Dave, in a half whisper; "but he will make a noise when we get him on the raft."

Piggy obediently followed on down the hillside close to the brink of the river, where his pan of food was given him upon the raft; while Dick stood by, brushing him and petting him, as he had often done before.

"This is what I call tramping," said Dave, as he gave his companion an empty box for a seat; "but you might have taken your thick coat. These dews are about like one of your rains down to Boston."

When Dave had pushed off the raft, and secured his pigship by fastening the halter to an iron ring which he had put in the centre of the craft for that purpose, he proceeded to wrap his own rough coat about Dick, and then seized a long pole, to keep his craft away from the rocks.

Piggy, wisely concluding that an extra supper and an unusual amount of rubbing were luxuries in his life, laid himself down at his young master's feet, and surveyed the scene.

"Are you quite sure you know how to steer?" asked Dick, as the raft shot down some rapids, and landed them between two rocks.

"Well, if going up and down this river from here to Vertville about five hundred times, with every sort of truck, from huckleberries to calves and sheep, can't teach me, why, then, I'm too green to learn. But wouldn't the madam take on if she should see you now?"

Dave always spoke of Mrs. Winthrop as "the madam."

"Grandma would be worried; and it is because I didn't care to have her worry, or to let everybody know, that I took your way. Grandpa might have sent Jake over with it; but that would make a talk."

"Of course it would," said Dave; "and it would be awful tame and everydayish. I don't like that way of doing, 'specially when we learn up to meetin' that we mustn't let our right hand know what our left is up to. That holds good for pigs, too, I reckon. Ain't Paws a good one, though, to keep so quiet, just like he knew there was a somethin' goin' on! I tell you, pigs are more knowin' than some folks think; and if Paws keeps still goin' up the lane, and we get him all snug and safe in the widow's pen, why, you may jes' reckon he's got brains like other folks. Look at him now; he ain't asleep."

"No," said Dick; "he seems to enjoy it."

"Reckon you don't, by the you way shiver. Now, I don't suppose you was ever out after dark before, was you?"

"Yes," said Dick; "once, ever so long ago, another boy and I were out all alone."

"Supposin' you tell about it, while I swing this raft over on the other bank a bit, to get clear of the rapids."

Dick related his experience; and as he did so, a memory of his mother's love and tenderness swept

over him, and he knew for a few moments what homesickness meant.

The dim light of the moon, the rushing waters of the river, the cry of the whippoorwill, and all the usual midnight sounds, oppressed the imaginative boy, and kept him silent.

"I say," said Dave, after Dick had been silent for a long time, "I say, you ain't quite so cheerful here as you was up after the chestnuts. Don't you fret now. I can see the old tree by the Garlands' barn, and Widow Lecky's is not far away. I expect Paws will give 'em a concert when we try to get him up that lane through the woods."

"I think he will follow me," said Dick; "and walking will get us warm. I would rather walk home than go on this."

"All right, I'm agreeable," said Dave, who was Dick's senior by several years. "We can tie up the raft here by the Garlands' boat, and I'll bring her up by daylight."

Thanks to Dave's knowledge of the river, combined with the low stage of water, and the strength of the raft, all were safely landed at Garland's, and Paws consented to mount the bank leading to the roadway.

Garland's house was safely passed, and the dark, lonesome lane leading to the widow's reached, before Paws reflected that he was leaving home.

When this was impressed upon him, he refused to go further. In vain did his little master rub him with his cold and unyielding fingers, and all in

vain did Dave try to persuade him by means of a stick. The food was gone, and piggy declined to travel.

The boys would not yield, neither would Paws. When they endeavored to make him go forward, he turned about and tried to travel in the opposite direction.

After an hour's struggle, both boys sat down on a roadside log to consider, while piggy, held fast by the leather halter, rooted up weeds and grass with furious haste.

"If he were small, we might carry him," said Dick.

"Yes," responded Dave, with his slow drawl intensified; "and if he was anything but a pig, we might beat him. It don't pay to beat pigs."

"We are warmer, at any rate," said Dick.

"That's true, but—"

Not another word did Dave utter, at least not one to be written down by a polite historian; for, as he spoke, away darted piggy in the direction of the widow's and the boys were forced to run also. It was a mad, queer chase, over bushes and brakes, through the darkness of midnight.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ROBBERS.

"I THOUGHT it was a mile from the main road," said Dick, as the boys sank down overcome with fatigue after seeing Paws safely within the enclosure, which he had at last entered as if by accident.

"A mile it is," said Dave.

"It seems like five; I never ran so before, and I thought if he should get by the place we could never get him back."

"Didn't he just stumble into that place, though! I snum, I thought mebbe we would have a tussle of it, so I put a bag of corn on old Moderation when I rode him to the blacksmith's this morning, and I just clipped across lots and left some of it in the far corner of the widder's sty. She was gone to the village with her butter, and I knew she wouldn't so much as look that way when she came back, for she always stops to Garland's to tea."

"That was real kind in you, Dave, and when I go back to Boston I sha'n't forget it. Let me see — you wanted a dark lantern, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Dave; "we fellows could play rob-

bers then, going home from singing-school, and there isn't such a thing round here."

"I should rather have a magic lantern," said Dick; "I don't think it is very nice to play robbers."

"Robbers, be you?" shouted a shrill voice, "robbers? Well, you walk quick, or I'll teach you a lesson with buckshot; march, or I'll shoot."

To the amazement and consternation of Dick, the widow stood in the dim light with an old shot-gun in her hand. She could not see their figures distinctly, for the moon was clouded, and the trees near her shed, quite thick.

"Don't shoot, widder; don't shoot; we are friends," said Dave, as quickly as his drawl would permit.

"Friends! I should say so — a-prowling round disturbing honest folks. I heered you a-trying to get into the barn."

"No; oh, no," exclaimed Dick, eagerly, "we brought you a present, Widow Lecky, and we wanted to surprise you. We are friends, and I am Dick Sylvester, from Boston."

"The land of light and liberty!" exclaimed the widow, coming nearer, "and you out here at midnight in the dampness; you'll be a corpse before your ma will ever see you. Come straight into the house. And you too, Dave; I ought to have known your voice by this time."

The boys were only too glad to find shelter, for they were tired after their long struggle with Paws, and the rain-like dew had soaked their garments.

When the widow had lighted a tallow candle, she

proceeded to make a brisk fire in her kitchen, and in a few moments the boys were warming themselves and drinking some hot cordial which the widow insisted on making for them.

"Now," she said, after she had removed Dick's shoes and placed them to dry, "now I want to hear the rights of this. I ain't lived here for ten years solitary and alone to be scared now by two little chaps; and it's pretty clear to my mind that, whatever the mischief is, Dave has led this city boy into it. Dave is as full of pranks as a woodchuck."

Dick was too honorable to permit his companion to be blamed, and he hastened to say: —

"You are mistaken, madam. You see it is all my fault; I heard about his dying, and I thought I would make the loss up to you, and so I didn't like to tell grandpa and grandma, and Dave said we would come after dark and surprise you."

"I should say surprise," said the widow, sternly, "but if you mean that a little fellow like you, with your trousers hitched above your knees, and your dandified coat, can make up the loss of such a man as my Isaac, why, you are sassier than you're big."

"I mean," said poor Dick, "I mean, —"

"I dare say you mean well, child; you don't look bad any way, not even with those pieces of trousers on; and you ain't the first one that has tried to come here and make his loss good and get hold of this farm, which is a million times better kept than in his day; but, you see, you've let the talk about its being lonely for me kind of work on your nerves, and Dave

has set you up to this. You don't need to laugh and shake your head, Dave. I know you; didn't you try to scare the life out of me with your punkin jack-o'-lantern, and didn't you make up verses about how I looked?"

Graceless Dave laughed harder than ever; it was impossible to resist; and even Dick found it necessary to turn his head away.

The widow's costume was amazing, if not amusing; and as the comfort of the kitchen made them forget the terrors outside, the boy nature bubbled up.

Dave was so pleased with the widow's mistake, and so diverted with her persistent chatter and Dick's eagerness to explain, that his risibles refused to be controlled. His mirth was infectious, and when Dick joined in, after numerous struggles to be respectful and orderly, the widow herself laughed grimly.

In her haste to repel the invaders she had put over her short bed-gown of white a long yellow skirt of flannel and an enormous pea-jacket, once the property of the lamented Isaac. To prepare herself still further, she had encased her feet in a pair of stout shoes of the kind usually worn by farmers, and above and beyond these, reaching to the margin of the brilliant skirt, was an intervening space wholly exposed to view.

To add still further to this unique costume, she had seized, in passing through the shed, a much worn hat of the pattern known as stove-pipe, and now

changed by reason of years and exposure from a dirty drab to a dirtier brown.

With Isaac's shot-gun in hand and her long gray hair floating beneath this ancient head-gear, she presented a picture calculated to strike the beholder with something less than awe and more than amusement.

Dick could not remove his eyes from this grotesque figure. Hitherto he had seen women who were careful concerning their make-up, and either dainty by nature or attractive through art.

Dave laughed like a young renegade who will find cause for mirth in a graveyard; reverence was wanting in his composition; but Dick wondered how any one could ever love such a repulsive creature, and if she had ever been pretty like the little girl in the cars.

Something his mother had once told him came to his mind as he sat there, — something about "the reverence due to age, whether it be lovely or unlovely," and something, too, his father was fond of saying, that "a true gentleman respected womankind, not dress, or form, or feature."

All this passed rapidly through the boy's mind, and he rose quickly to his feet.

"You will please forgive me for laughing," he said; "you have been very kind to us, and I am glad that we brought Paws to you, for I am sure you will take care of him."

"Bless your little heart," said the widow, "I don't blame you for laughing one mite; but what under the sun you mean by Paws is beyond me."

"I'll tell you," said Dave, who now began to be a little ashamed of his boisterous mirth; "you see, Mister Dick has got an awful soft heart, and his grandpa gave him a pet pig, and it was always standing in the trough with its fore feet, so he called it Paws, and we have just been fattening him up good, and he knows about all Mister Dick says, and follows him round; he said he was going to give him to you, so we built a raft and floated him down to Garland's, and got him here after a peck of trouble. He was awful set about coming up your lane, and just as we had got him in and was setting down to rest, why, you come out and spoiled all the fun, 'cause it won't surprise you now, only to see what a fine big feller he is."

The widow Lecky looked at Dick and then at Dave; and at last, after trying in vain to swallow something which interfered with speech, she crossed the kitchen, and laid her hand on Dick's head, — a hard, crooked, toil-worn hand, but it rested gently.

"You've kind of broke me up, little chap; I couldn't be surpriseder if I had gone out and found him, and I couldn't think of robbing you, but I'll feed him, and mind him well, and whatever he fetches, and whenever he fetches it, full half shall be yours. I ain't good at speakin', for I am only a dumbity sort of creetur, that the world has gone hard with, bitter hard; but I am not so dumbity that I can't tell kindness from kicks; and do you just go into the little room yonder and creep into bed, and I'll go out and harness up, and be ready to tell Jake,

by the time that he is stirring, that you are safe and sound."

"Oh, no; please take us," cried Dick, eagerly, "for grandpa would be ill if he found me gone, and Dave must be ready at milking-time. I climbed out of the window and came down the piazza, and I can creep back the same way."

Dave added his plea, and the widow consented, after thanking both boys again and again for their labor in her behalf. As she went to the little room near by, and made her simple toilet, Dick heard her saying: —

"Only to think of it! all for a poor, lonely, dumbity creetur like me; I'll never fret no more, for the Lord must have put it into his little kind heart, and the pig has been better than the parson to me, for there will be no forgetting this sermon."

When the boys held the lantern over the sty and bade her see her new treasure, she could not find words enough to express her gratitude and pleasure. And I question much, dear reader, if the cluster diamond which you received last Christmas awoke within your breast sincerer or more genuine emotion than little Dick's gift to the widow Lecky.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LITTLE SISTER.

LET no one suppose for a moment that Dick's deed of benevolence was kept a secret; the widow told it to her neighbor Garland before sunrise, and Mr. Garland, having daily dealings with a milkman who purchased his milk at the door for distant customers in Boston, naturally told it to the milkman, who in return gave a detailed account of the affair to three more farmers who furnished him with supplies, and these farmers carried it, in the course of the day, to the village post-office, whence it spread like a thistledown.

Dick was in danger of being spoiled. The people who never act generously themselves admire it in others. A few said, —

"It does not matter; his grandpa will give him another, and the family are wealthy."

His grandfather did not give him another, but determined that the boy should know the measure of full self-sacrifice.

Fortunately for Dick, several events took place about this time which so engrossed his thoughts and time that he quite forgot to mourn for Paws or miss his daily visits to the family under the barn.

A letter came from Dick's father telling him that one Sunday morning, just as the bells were ringing for church, and unseen angels were supposed to be listening to the prayers of happy and unhappy human beings, a gift had arrived at Brookford, — a gift so rare and precious, so welcome and mysterious, that all the household went about with smiling faces. Dick had a little sister.

"A little beauty," wrote Tom, "with large eyes, and wavy, soft, silky baby hair. No bald-headed, toothless, wrinkled, and red-faced bit of ugliness, but a dear baby girl, pretty and gentle, who brought a world of love with her, and nestled at once into the place provided by kind Heaven."

This news made Dick quite wild. If there was one thing in the wide world which he longed for, prayed for, and had even cried for, it was a baby sister.

Every fellow in school had one or more, and Dick felt personally aggrieved that he should live alone until he was ten years of age.

He did not wait to hear the conclusion of his father's letter before he began a series of gymnastics in the small dining-room, which threatened to destroy all the dainty china which Grandma Winthrop considered necessary even in the country.

"I must go home at once," said Dick; "they will need me."

"Wait a moment," said grandma, "and hear this: 'Your mamma is far from strong, and it is necessary to keep the house quiet; consequently, you can remain, as at first proposed, until after Thanksgiving.'"

No, he was not needed, not even wanted, and perhaps that little baby would keep mamma busy all the time, and there would be no more nice walks or readings or lessons.

Grandma comforted him a little when she suggested that she would be older, wiser, and perhaps prettier, when he returned.

It was astonishing to hear the plans made for the tiny girl. With the aid of Dave, Dick constructed a small wagon for her use, quite forgetting that its general style was not adapted to the city. Then he amused himself by preparing a cushioned seat on the raft, and one rainy day, when he could not get out of doors, he divided his entire store of chestnuts, walnuts, and butternuts into equal parts. As his live stock could not be divided, he besought his grandfather to set apart some for little sister."

Suddenly it occurred to Dick that she was nameless, and he wondered if his father and mother had thought about it. The necessity for a name arose when Dave asked if he supposed it would be called for his mamma.

Dick's grandma said: No, Bessie would not care to repeat it; and if Dick chose he might suggest some name.

Dick flew to the book-shelves, where a few never-to-be-missed volumes rested, after their journey from Boston; but nothing pleased him. He tried the Bible; but the Sarahs and Deborahs were not to his taste. So he sat down and wrote a letter to his father, which letter Tom laughed over, and carefully put away in his pocket-book.

"It is a curio," he said; "and when he is a man I will show it to him."

Three days after this important intelligence had reached Dick, an event happened which caused even Grandma Winthrop to think less of the unseen little sister and more of Master Dick.

Grandpa Winthrop's farm boasted of a fine apple orchard, — so fine that it was quite the envy of the farmers, who had laughed at the former owner for spending so much money. It was apple time; and Jake, after consultation with his employers, had brought up from the village a large load of empty barrels, and had also hired two young lads to assist Dave in picking.

"There are some places where a boy is better than a man," said Jake; "and a fruit tree is one of them. You see, a limb that would send a man sprawling will hold a boy easy."

It was a beautiful autumn day when the work began; and Jake drove the old gentleman's low phaeton near the trees, where he might enjoy the sport.

Miss Graham was there. She had come up from Vertville for the day, looking lovelier than ever, in her new fall suit. And Widow Lecky was there; for she insisted on helping sort out — indeed, she was always assisting in some way since Paws had changed homes. And grandma was there, looking too young and comely to be grandma, or the wife of the old man beside her.

It was Indian summer now; and the soft air

seemed to beg pardon for its past sharpness which had ruthlessly cut down vines and flowers.

"Do let us have a harvest dinner out of doors," said Miss Graham, as she looked around upon the peaceful scene.

"I should like it immensely," said grandpa.

"Then we will have it," responded grandma; for grandpa found few things to enjoy.

"I will help," said Miss Graham. "Let me see; suppose I make apple dumplings!"

"The very thing!" said grandpa.

"Let the widow get you up one of her cream fricasees," said Jake, from the top of his ladder; "she's a prime one for that."

"I will make the coffee," said grandma, as she returned to the house to issue her orders.

"Hand-picked and A 1," said Jake, some hours later, as he proudly passed from barrel to barrel. "Come down now, Mister Dick; you have worked like a beaver to-day; and the dinner is about ready."

"Let me get that beauty on the end of the limb," said Dick; "it will make a whole pie."

"All right; make sure of your feet. I never saw a city chap who could climb so well."

"That is owing to gymnasium practice," said grandpa.

Oh, fateful apple, why did you tempt the child as you tempted long ago the mother of our race? A quick, sharp sound, a rustling among the branches, and Dick lay stunned and silent on the ground below.

It was Widow Lecky who first raised him in her arms, and she it was who saw the old man's startled white face, and called to him that the boy was all right.

Poor Dick! the treacherous wood had parted just where it seemed strongest; and, in falling, he had struck larger limbs on his way down.

Every hand on the farm tried to help; and Jake was already on his way to the village doctor's.

Miss Graham was weeping even while she obeyed the widow's orders; and Grandma Winthrop tried to soothe her nervous husband, with a feeling of horror at heart, which she wisely concealed. She guarded this stricken companion as a mother guards a delicate child.

"His pulses is beatin'," said the widow; "and he's a-comin' to. The poor little precious will speak to us pretty soon. I don't think any bones is broke; so look cheerful, and don't scare him."

How hard to look cheerful when the scale tips this way and that between life and death! And yet every one tried.

Just as Jake dashed into the orchard, followed by the doctor, Dick opened his eyes and saw the anxious faces about him.

"I fell; didn't I?" he asked.

It was the widow who answered.

"Yes, deary, and Heaven be praised you are not killed."

Dick wondered how he had ever thought the widow ugly, as he saw her kind face bending over him.

The doctor examined him carefully; not a bone broken, and, so far as one could see, no injury done, save a severe shaking.

When at last the little man in knickerbockers stood up and brushed the grass from his clothing, the old orchard rang with cheers, and never was harvest dinner seasoned better with gratitude and thanksgiving.

The doctor gladly shared it with the happy family, and went away thinking himself a very fortunate man, for the old gentleman had insisted on presenting him with a gold piece, which would purchase the new saddle he had long needed.

"Grandma," said Dick, that evening, when she was rubbing his bruised shoulders, "I thought when I felt the old thing break that it would be real nice for papa and mamma to have little sister left."

CHAPTER XL.

DICK GROWS WARLIKE.

DICK's fall did not prove serious, and in a few days he was about the farm as usual. It was a little lonely for him, as Jake had taken Dave with him to bring some lumber for grandpa's new barn, and the walk home over a sandy road would not answer for Dick. He wandered about noiselessly for a while, and at last strolled into the barn. The doors were wide open and seemed to say "come in." Jake had been busy sorting squashes the day previous, some for home use, some for market, and some for the family under the barn. The golden piles looked very tempting beside a small cluster of dark Hubbard squashes.

"I know what I will do," said Dick; "I'll make a fort, and Jake will laugh when he gets home."

All the morning he worked diligently, and when Maria called him to dinner she informed Mrs. Winthrop that the dear little man was whistling away all by himself out in the barn.

The little man ate his dinner and hurried away. Since the Winthrops had been in the country they had adopted the custom of dining at noonday.

Grandpa liked it, and the servants were better pleased.

"What are you going to do this afternoon, my love?" asked grandma, as Dick seized his hat.

"Going to finish my fort," responded Dick.

"Would you like to drive with us to Vertville; we are going down to purchase some supplies?"

"Not to-day," said Dick; "I am too busy, but I can harness for you."

Thanks to his parents, Dick was an accomplished horseman for his years, and although he permitted Maria to open the carriage-house door and help him get out the phaeton, he would not allow her to touch old Moderation, the sure and slow animal which rejoiced Grandma Winthrop's heart. He had not sufficient animation to run from anything or for anything.

Dick brought him up to the door in fine style; for all that Moderation lacked in speed and spirit he made up in appearance.

"There," he said, as they drove away, "now I will keep house. Jake will not be back before supper time, Maria is sure to be all day doing up her citron, and there is no one but Cassy. I'll ask Maria if she can spare Cassy."

Cassy was the little daughter of the housekeeper, a genuine country maiden of eight summers, who looked upon Dick as some superior being, and stood ready to do his bidding at all times. When Dave was about, Cassy, received very little attention, but Dick was tired of playing alone, and Cassy could be useful.

"Yes," said Maria; "I should be glad to have her go out. She's terrible pestering if I keep her indoors."

Cassy was wrapped in a hood and shawl, for, as Maria said, the air was "Octoberish," and the two children began their labors.

"Now, Cassy," said Dick, "this is the fort, and the tall ones with stems are the soldiers. The dark ones are the Indians going to attack the fort."

"No, they ain't," said Cassy; "they are just Hubbards, and Jake got the seed of Mr. Garland, and he got it when he went to the State House. I heard ma say so."

"They don't keep seeds at the State House," said Dick.

"Don't they?"

"Oh, no; only war-flags and politicians. My grandpa used to be there."

"Well, Jake he got 'em, and I know this is a marrow squash, and that one is a turban."

"They are not squashes now," said Dick, tartly. "Can't you understand we are playing. Here's my uncle's fort, away out West."

"What is a fort?" asked Cassy, innocently.

Such ignorance appalled Dick. He dropped the squash he was about to put in position as the commanding officer, and looked at the little girl.

"Don't you know anything?" he said, as he looked scornfully at the round, good-natured face, framed in its red woollen hood.

"Yes," said Cassy, meekly. "I know 'two pints

make a quart,' and all the multiplication, and I can count a hundred backwards, and knit mittens all but the thumb, and once I made dip toast for ma when she was sick, only I burned it a little, and our minister said I knew my verses best of all our class in Sunday-school. Ain't that something?"

"I s'pose so," said Dick; "but you ought to know about forts and battles and Indians: it is all in the history, and they killed each other."

"I shouldn't like it one bit," said Cassy, stoutly; "not a bit; it's wicked to kill folks, and I wouldn't like to know any more if I've got to be wicked."

"Indians are not folks!" said Dick.

"Who made 'em?" asked Cassy.

"Well, I suppose they are a kind of folks," said Dick; "but they have killed lots of white people, and so they have to be punished."

"P'raps they didn't know any better. If you didn't know any better, would you be killed too?"

Cassy's peculiar line of thought vexed Dick; his fort was waiting. The small squashes were ready to be thrown at the garrison, and Dave had taught him all the mysteries of bombarding, capturing the soldiers, bearing off the wounded, and kindred details of war, which Dave had found in books. Thus far the Indian question had never entered into Dick's lessons, and as Dave was fifteen he was considered good authority.

When Cassy found that Dick was cross, she went away and sat down on the tongue of an ox-cart which stood in the barn.

"Come, hurry up," said Dick; "the first gun will be fired soon, and we must pitch into them."

"I won't kill folks," said literal Cassy.

"You are a naughty little girl."

"No, I'm not," said Cassy; "I know all the commandments, and it isn't right, and I won't play."

This was too much for our Dick, who was, as we have shown you, by no means perfect. Seizing the little girl by the shoulders, he shook her until she could not speak, and then walked indignantly away.

Young as she was, Cassy was too proud to cry aloud, and any complaint would cause her to be ordered within doors; when Dick left her, she sank down upon the cart-tongue and sobbed quietly.

Dick listened to the sobs for a few moments, while he pretended to work, but his heart was not in it. He thought of his mother and the little sister at home, and how many, many times he had been told that only a coward strikes or injures one younger or weaker; and something seemed to say: "Suppose for one moment that a great big boy should shake your little sister?" Dick's anger assumed another form as he thought of it. If he was easily vexed, he was also ready to atone for his fault.

"I say, Cassy, don't mind, please; I am sorry I shook you. Come, play now, and we will be good friends. It's only play, you know."

Thus coaxed and comforted, Cassy, true to her sex, forgot the insult and injury, and readily forgave the sinner. For some time the work went on bravely, until an inspiration seized Dick.

"I say, Cassy, wouldn't it be good fun to make faces in some of those big fellows; they would look more like men?"

Cassy assented; since her shaking of the early afternoon Dick had been so kind she was ready to assent to anything.

"Well, you go in and bring out Jake's pruning knives, that are sticking in the beam in the shed, and we will do it. I can cut pumpkins, for Dave showed me how, and squashes are easier."

How diligently they worked; how fast the mutilation went on! Evil increases more rapidly than good. All the largest squashes were selected by these mischievous sculptors, because, as Dick remarked, "you could make such queer big noses."

When these grotesque soldiers were once more in place, the young artists wearied of the sport and wandered away to the field beyond the barn, where some young calves were roaming about. Grandpa Winthrop had returned, bringing with him the latest magazine and some books for his dear boy, and grandma was now putting her invalid to rest, after asking for Dick.

"He has been playing about all day, marm, as good as a kitten," said Maria; "and the last I saw of him and Cassy, they was going across the meadow with something for the calves."

When Jake came home, tired with his hard day at the mill, and not a little annoyed with the men who had delayed him, who can portray his indignation? He stood for one moment in the doorway of

the old barn, gazing mournfully upon his mutilated squashes, and then burst out with words neither classic nor few.

While his explosive utterances were still being scattered like shot and shell, Dick, the calm, cool, and polite, approached, bringing with him great branches of gayly colored leaves.

"Hello, Jake!" he said; "we've had lots of fun. I wanted to keep the best battle till you came home. The Indians are all ready."

"Fun," groaned Jake; "I should say so! About eight hundred pounds of my best squashes ruined, and those big ones on top were going to the fair!"

"Oh, no, they are not ruined," said Dick; "you have to cut them up, you know, when you make pies."

"Well, we ain't a-going to make pies for all Boston!" said Jake.

CHAPTER XLI.

COOL.

WHEN Dave saw the array in the barn, he laughed merrily; what cared he for loss or gain, although he well knew the value of the fine vegetables! His only thought was that any other fellow would be soundly whipped for it, and yet Master Dick would escape.

"Don't you know, you little idiot," exclaimed Jake, "that you have spoiled the whole lot, and some of 'em were already sold?"

Dick had never been called an idiot before, and he did not enjoy it, neither had he ever seen Jake angry. They had been rare friends hitherto, and his anger was hard to bear.

"Not that I care for myself," said Jake, "but the old gentleman has been as tickled as a child about these squashes, and some of 'em he had picked out himself to send to particular friends; the money won't be so much as the disappointment, and I was almost sure I should get a premium on those two marrows. I hate to tell the old gentleman, little things rile him up so."

Poor Dick! he must hear all this, and with it re-

member that he had been warned again and again not to vex grandpa, lest it should bring on another attack of illness.

When Jake had finished scolding, he turned toward Dick, who was looking shamefaced and sorrowful over his barrier of autumn leaves.

"I'll pay the money, Jake," he said, "every cent; you sha'n't lose anything, and grandpa won't mind if I tell him myself. I didn't know it hurt 'em just to cut 'em a little."

"I should say a little. However, you can make it all right with your grandpa, and if I catch you in this barn inside of a week I will shake you."

Dick was tempted to cry, but Cassy, who stood near and knew better than the boy that scoldings were not lasting, whispered consolingly, "Never mind if he does; it didn't hurt much when you shook me."

Could he ever forgive himself for it? Could he ever forget those beseeching blue eyes and the ruddy baby face? Dick walked away sorrowful.

"Grandma," he said, as they sat together before the open fire that evening, "don't it seem as if you had lived a whole year some days; it has been the biggest while since breakfast?" He had unbosomed himself to his grandmother, and written a long letter home, in which he asked his father to send him at once ten dollars of his own money in the little bank, —two was for the premium Jake didn't get, and the rest for grandpa's squashes.

Tom Sylvester answered promptly; for, said he,

"The sooner the little chap learns to do absolute justice in every relation of life, to every person, the sooner he will be a man worthy of the name."

The premium was paid, and grandpa was paid; but perhaps the very best thing Dick did was to buy in Vertville a little dress for Cassy, which fully rewarded her for the vigorous shaking she had undergone.

For several days Dick devoted himself to horseback exercise, and no more mischief was planned. Then the carpenters came, with a chest of tools and huge timbers, to put up a fine barn and remodel the small house. Grandpa wished to oversee the work himself, and Dick acted as messenger and assistant.

"If you will watch the men closely," said grandpa, "you may get some new ideas. It is always well to learn all you can from each person you meet."

Dick watched. On the first day he asked questions of the workmen, on the second he examined every tool in their chests, and on the third he thought it the easiest thing in the world to erect a building. When the shingles were laid, Grandpa Winthrop saw the boy on the top of the barn, diligently hammering away by the side of a workman. When Tom surprised the family one day by walking in upon them, he found his son and heir seated astride the ridge-pole, waving a flag his grandpa had given him.

Tom declared that it was quite impossible to live another day without seeing the little chap; and Bessie, mother-like, was distressed about his flannels,

since the cool nights came on. All the way up in the cars Tom had thought of his boy — how he would run to meet him; how pleased he would be; how he would nestle in his arms, and call him again and again, "dear papa."

All his life Tom had laughed at sentimental people, and the gushing ones who exhibit their affection at railway stations, and part from their dear ones regardless of the strange eyes bent upon them. Tom was just beginning to discriminate between the true, deep, and tender regard which is proud to acknowledge its own the wide world over, and the effusive, loud, and showy farewells or greetings which vex the looker-on because a sacred thing has been exposed to curious eyes.

Every day of his life he loved Dick more and more. The boy was growing into his heart day by day; and the advent of his little daughter increased it.

"It is a queer thing," said Tom to himself, as the cars rattled on, "very queer. I did not think anything could ever seem quite so precious as the little chap; and here is the baby girl just as much beloved. I wonder if the great Father of us all increases our capacity for loving as we grow older? I laughed at my Bessie for saying she was hungry to see her boy; and yet I find my heart hurrying on faster than the train, I am so eager to see his bright, laughing face.

As Tom walked up from the little station, he pleased himself with pictures of the boy, and even

decided his manner of speech when he should see him. He was doomed to disappointment. When at last Tom emerged from the grove, and the farm-house and new barn were in full view, he saw Dick, as we have said, seated in triumph on the ridge-pole.

"Hello, papa!" called the boy.

Tom fairly shivered — if he should fall! if — there was little time for conjecture, as Dick resumed: —

"You didn't come to take me home, did you? I don't want to go."

Poor Tom! his pictures were shattered; and he thought of Bessie and the letter the boy had written her.

"Come down now," he called, "and we will talk about that later."

"All right," said Dick; "wait until I put the flag in its place. This is to show them where to put the vane. Grandpa and I bought the weather-vane; and it's a beauty too — a big horse kicking up."

Dick calmly and deliberately put the flag in position, fastened it with a nail or two, and then clambered down to the staging, and thence to the ground, when his father caught him in his arms.

"Aren't you glad to see me, you little rogue?"

"Yes, if you won't take me home."

"Why, home is the dearest place in the world," said Tom; "and mamma is very anxious to see her dear boy, and show him the little sister."

"I can't go until the barn is done," said Dick;

whereupon the head carpenter laughed. Quite vexed with the apparent heartlessness of the boy, Tom turned away, and led him into the house.

"You must take me in to grandma," he said; and Dick did so.

If Tom Sylvester had studied boys more, and Rankin less, he would have known that the peculiar bravado which is often taken for indifference is part of the boy nature, and arises neither from selfishness nor a lack of affection. Men can do but one thing at a time; and the growing boy looks with aversion upon anything which interferes with his present pleasure or pursuit. I question much if any man ever develops the best and most Godlike side of his nature until he is brought into close communion with some good woman. Tom Sylvester's training with his mother had prepared him somewhat for his happy married life; but, after all, little Dick was his best instructor.

In less than an hour the boy was showing his father about the place with great pride and pleasure, and at night, when grandma announced that he might share his father's room, Dick's large eyes sparkled, and Tom's heart was comforted. The country, with all its charms, had not weaned the boy from home and mother; it was only a temporary fascination, like that which affects you, my good friend, while you listen to the voice of some celebrated singer, or watch the graceful movements of a gifted actress. You have not forgotten the home loves or home cares; you are simply taking in new inspiration, which

will increase your power of loving the birds in your own nest.

It was nearly midnight before Dick's questions were answered, and long after the curly head was still a sleepy voice said: —

"I am so glad you came, papa. It seems so good to see you again."

And Tom Sylvester uttered an audible "Bless the boy."

CHAPTER XLII.

THANKSGIVING.

BEFORE Tom Sylvester returned to Boston, he had promised to visit Montclair with his wife and little one for a Thanksgiving dinner on the farm. This intelligence gave Dick sincere pleasure. Tom no longer doubted the boy's loyalty, and was much amused to find him selecting and arranging various gifts for his mother and sister. In order to make the rejoicing complete, Mrs. Winthrop wrote cordial invitations to the judge and Mrs. Livingston, Aunt Mary, "Skim," and "dear Mr. Smiley," as Dick persisted in calling his former tutor.

All accepted with pleasure if the weather was favorable, and the preparations at once began at the farm.

Maria and Cassy were busy from morning until night; Jake put up stoves and fastened on double windows, and Dave polished every corner of the large carriage which would bring the guests from the station.

The new barn would be quite complete by that time, and the hay which was now stored under the sheds would be moved into its spacious lofts. Even the cows and horses would keep Thanksgiving day.

That no fatigue might mar the pleasures, grandpa insisted that Bessie should come to them on the Monday previous, accompanied by Aunt Mary, whose sweet, sad face was a benediction.

Dick himself drove down for them, much to Jake's delight, who was proud of the boy's cool, skilful management of the horses. Aunt Mary was filled with dread when she found that the child was entrusted with the care of such spirited animals, but Bessie knew them to be quite safe, and Dick's exploit of the long ago had fully tested his powers.

Baby sister was so wrapped and bundled, so cuddled and concealed by Aunt Mary, that poor Dick could not see the little face with any comfort until the farm was reached and the whole party were seated around the glowing fire in the library.

When the child's numerous wraps were removed, grandma placed the little creature in the boy's waiting arms, and Dick's happiness was quite complete.

Her smiles, the little puckers about her mouth, her dimpled fists, her tiny fingers, and liliputian finger nails, were wonderful to the boy, and Dave, with all the allurements of the barn, the river, and the shed, could not entice him away until the little creature slept peacefully; then he went out and said to Dave, with great solemnity, that babies were stranger than calves, or pigs, or even the little birds.

"They cost more to keep, and don't pay half so well," responded Dave.

This view of the case so perplexed Dick that he carried it to his mother.

"Do you remember," asked Bessie, "those brave words of George Macdonald, which I read to you just before you left home?"

"You have read me so many pretty things which he has written, that I cannot tell, mamma."

"Truth and right are the lords of this world also, and must prevail; although money and brains be against them."

"Does that mean that one boy or girl trained to do right and be true is better than money, or the things Dave sells for money?"

"Precisely, dear; do the thing because it is right and true, even if you die for doing it."

"It is pretty hard sometimes, mamma." Dick was thinking of Rob and his teasing friends.

"It is very hard. A weak 'yes' is so much easier than a strong 'no'; but a coward only will utter the 'yes' when truth and justice demand a 'no.'

Dick was silent a few moments; then little by little the story all of his misdeeds was told, all his thoughtless, careless, madcap doings since he had said good-by to his mother in Boston.

Bessie comforted much, and blamed unsparingly but kindly; the very truth she was seeking to instil would be dishonored otherwise. And when at last the boy left her side, he was happier than in weeks before. Blessed is the boy who can carry his smallest grief to such a wise and loving counsellor; thrice blessed the man who knows the world's hard-

ness and trials, and yet finds in the mother who nursed him in infancy, and first guided his trembling feet, the ready listener, the sympathizing friend, the unfailing comforter. Chide him not, O good wife, for this, for Heaven grants but one mother, and no earthly measurement can estimate her sacrifices, sufferings, hopes, fears, and delights. When your own baby nestles in your arms, you will better understand why her throne in his heart can never be vacated until the last sunset has rested on her brow.

Bessie's experience with Dick was leading her to a better knowledge of her own dear mother, whose life had been shadowed by the wrong doing of her son.

The brilliant and misguided young man, although silent forever, was tenderly remembered by his family; and Bessie knew, as she had never known before, why sorrow had visited her in her girlhood. It prepared her to understand her own child.

Thanksgiving came, crisp, clear, sun-crowned. All the hills were bathed in color, from deep purple and deeper green to soft grays and browns. The air was full of life and cheer, and Tom disdained the carriage sent down for him, and resolved to walk with Smiley. Two college friends, no longer boys, but bushy bearded men; and yet with quick pulses and almost youthful zeal.

"Let us try it, Smiley," said Tom, after he had seen the carriage start away with its laughing load.

The judge was already uttering jokes, and, Tom thought, was never so handsome or happy before.

"Yes; let us, by all means," responded Smiley; "it will bring us an appetite, and one cannot afford to hurry through this glorious country."

Smiley still accomplished a walk of five miles daily, but Tom had grown careless since his marriage, and a good turnout at the door is not calculated to develop a man's muscles.

So the friends walked; leaving Dick once more in charge of the span; and, as the carriage dashed by, the occupants cheered the pedestrians, and promised to save for them a generous slice of Maria's turkey.

It delighted Dick's grandma to find him rosy and healthy, and the judge was pleased to observe a certain manliness about him which promised well for his future.

"If Tom manages wisely," said the judge to his wife that evening, "Dick will make a smart man."

"I am inclined to think that Tom's wife deserves some credit," said Mrs. Livingston, with a smile.

"Quite right, my dear, quite right: and you are the only woman I ever saw who could be just to a son's wife."

"I am glad you have limited the number to your own vision," said his wife. "I know many mothers who gladly admit the excellence and sweetness of their daughters-in-law; in fact, I never admit the 'law' in my case. Bessie is a dear child; to me a veritable daughter."

"And worthy of all love," said the judge, warmly; "but, my dear, what does she propose doing with this

boy of hers? He is growing rapidly, is quick-witted, alert, handsome, and heedless. I hope I can live to see him a man among men."

"I sincerely hope you may," replied his wife. "I do not worry about Dick's future; he will never follow any leader for the sake of being led; he is original, independent, almost reckless, certainly fearless."

"He is too good to waste in my profession," said the judge; "too tender of heart to be a surgeon, too full of mischief to become a clergyman, and the professions are over-full."

"His latest ambition is to be a stock-raiser," said Mrs. Livingston, with a derisive little smile.

Just at this moment a merry laugh was heard, and there outside of the window, grinning in upon them, was a huge face, surrounded with shaggy hair.

"A pumpkin-lantern, as I live," said the judge; "but the boy has his candle in wrong," and away went the judge to join Dick and Dave at their sport, — a very boy at heart, despite his years; and where in all the wide world can one find a fairer picture than that of a man who has passed through fiery trials unscathed and still holds his youth within him?

CHAPTER XLIII.

MRS. WELSH'S OPINION.

"FOR the land's sake!"

It was Mrs. Welsh who spoke, and she was addressing her son, who had just entered her small home, now much enlarged since the day when Dick Sylvester bought her baby and carried it home.

It was eight years since then, and although we are tempted to tell all that happened to our hero from the time of the Thanksgiving dinner at Montclair down to the sharp, frosty morning when Mrs. Welsh nearly upset a pan of buckwheats on her kitchen stove and uttered the above exclamation, we must forbear and let this good woman present the picture as it stands before her kindly eyes.

"For the land's sake, Bob, you don't mean it!"

"True as the book, mother. You see I was coming up across the garden and I saw old David, and he called me and told me that Mr. Dick had been speaking to his father about me to help David, seeing his roomatiz was getting so bad."

"And him a-going off; dear, dear, what changes!"

"Hold on till I read it to you, mother; it's in the morning papers. David said so, and I bought one."

"'The successful candidate for the vacancy in our district at West Point was D. Sylvester, only son of our valued citizen, Thomas Sylvester, Esq. The young gentleman is a graduate of our Latin school, and, we are proud to say, passed first in everything at the competitive examination, although so young, being just seventeen.'"

"There," said Bob, "that's him."

"Bless his dear heart," said the motherly Mrs. Welsh, "I can see him as plain as day, just as he looked the night I went up for your sister, and here she is a big girl herself now,—how the years does run on. So he's to be a milingtary man, and it would do me good to see him in his fine clothes. I told you always, Bob, that them as called him a dreadful boy didn't know his ways; to be sure, he cut up all David's taters once, thinking if one tater was good for seed more would be, and he killed the Plymouth Rock hens his father was so proud of, to see if the meat was spotted like their feathers, and he ran off with the horses, and put pepper in the furnace pipes, and whitewashed the basement windows, to make 'em look like a saloon, he said; but he wasn't the leastest might ugly about it, and he couldn't be so very dreadful, with such a pa and ma. I remember one day, when his tutor, that Mr. What's-his-name—"

"Smiley, ma," suggested Bob.

"Smiley, but he never smiles, and is the soberest man I ever did see out of the pulpit; well, he come here and sez he, 'Could you tell me anything of our

young gentleman?' sez he, and I sez, 'No, you would be up early and go to bed late if you think of keeping the run of him.' Then Mr. What's-his-name he said, sort of short like, 'Master Dick makes less trouble than boys in general.' So I sez, 'If you think I'm one of those that thinks a boy is going to the bad because he cuts a few didos, why, you were never more mistook in your life. I've loved Master Dick since he was cunning enough to buy my Nannie and carry her to his own house, and there's nothing I would not do for him, sir; but there is folks as never can make a difference betwixt fun and wickedness. I'm not a scholar, sir; but having raised a family of ten as good as the average, I am bold to say that more is ruined for want of patience and a blind eye than the grand scholars and professors and priests think of.' Then the gentleman he stepped right in and took a chair, and sez he, 'Would you mind telling me, Mrs. Welsh, what you mean by a blind eye?' I was most scared to think I had spoke out so plain, but I said maybe the Lord can allow even a poor woman like me to know something of children and their ways that richer folks haven't found out; so I made bold to speak, for he has a quiet way with him, and seems very kindly. 'Why, you see, sir,' sez I, 'sometimes when I've had to go out and leave the little ones all day I would feel sick and weak like, thinking they might get into trouble, and then when I would see the petted children, where I would be at work, I've thought a good

deal about children and how they get up and have such troubles as grown folks are apt to forget. I ain't ashamed to own, sir, that many's the time my tears has fallen into the tub, thinking of my little ones here with no one to mind 'em; but folks like me are not thought to care, but you'll never know, sir, how long the way seems home, and how my heart beats until I see the house all safe, and the children, too, thank God.' 'I can understand it, Mrs. Welsh,' sez he, 'and I think you are very brave to manage as you have done with your large family.' 'I don't know 'bout the brave part,' sez I, 'since I was just owning to a sore heart, but, you see, sir, I am getting at the blind eye. In the fine families where I work, — and there's none finer, — I was always watching the young folks, and putting them side by side with my own, not presuming like, sir; only thinking how I could do as well or better for mine, seeing that the care of their bringing-up was mostly on my own shoulders. Well, I've seen a deal of trouble by fathers and mothers noticing every little fault, and a deal, too, by being careless about things which I should count as sinful; so many's the day when I've stood all alone in one of their fine laundries, thinking about it, and I sez, reasoning poor enough, as one who is not a scholar must reason, "Now, I'm doing things I had better leave undone, every day, and how should I feel if some one whipped, or scolded, or shut me up for it?" And sez I, "there is nothing for it but to close one eye to the children's folly, and open the other wide when

sin is sin," and since I did that, sir, things have gone easy, — quite easy. I think Mr. Dick's mother first showed me the way, being so gentle, and letting himself punish himself when he went wrong. Her doings have helped me a sight with Bob.' "

"You didn't tell the gentleman I was bad, mother, did you!" asked Bob, eagerly.

"Well, no, dear; I wouldn't be shaming myself that way; but you know there has been times when you have just made me sick and sore with doing things you needn't have done, or saying words you should never have said, — not that I'm findin' fault, Bob, my dear, for I think you was always sorry for it; if not then, you are now."

"What else did Mr. Smiley say?" asked Bob, with an effort to swallow a disagreeable truth.

"Well, he stayed here a spell; and when he went away, he says, holding his hat off to me, like I was a born lady, he sez: 'I wish we had more mothers like Mrs. Sylvester and yourself, Mrs. Welsh; and if Master Dick and your Bob are not good and useful men, it will not be your fault.' And then he said something about every mother who raised a son to manhood, who was good and true, raising her own monument. I couldn't tell you all he said, in his nice, quiet way; but somehow I felt better for it; and the blueing didn't spot the clothes, and the starch didn't stick, and everything went better all day. Bless my heart, Bob Welsh, here comes Mr. Dick himself! Now, you don't suppose that a fine

young gentleman like him is coming to tell me the news hisself. Jump up, Bob! Take the kitten out of that arm-chair, and dust it off! Yes, he is coming sure. Just see the figure of him! Won't he make a milingtary man worth seeing! Stir yourself, Bob; there's his knock at the door! Maybe it's laundry work he must have done."

CHAPTER XLIV.

DICK ENTERS WEST POINT.

TOM SYLVESTER was meditating. He had been meditating for months; ever since his boy had startled him with the announcement that he should like to enter West Point.

All Tom's theories and plans were exploded; all his mother and the judge had said about Dick's entering the old firm worse than useless.

Dick had done his own thinking, in his own way; and it began long before the fight of the squashes in the barn at Montclair.

The Quaker element in Mrs. Sylvester's family rebelled. Bessie's mother-in-law and Bessie's peace-principles entered a strong and silent protest; and Grandpa Winthrop cried like a child when he heard of it.

"You see, mother," said Dick, as he lounged in her room, and looked steadily at her, trying in vain to convince himself that she was not suffering at all, "you see how it is, motherdy. I have a taste for this sort of thing. I need thorough and systematic training; and Uncle Sam is the only one who provides it. You won't mind it so very much, with Rosie

to comfort you. And I'll write very often; and you can come and see me; and I will do you credit, — indeed I will."

His boyish earnestness did not hide from his mother the unselfishness which made him consider her happiness and comfort before his own coming hardships.

"You forget the prison-like life," she said, "which your cousin so well describes, — the privations, the loss of all home delicacies and comforts, the stringent, inflexible rules, and the difficulty of getting away, even in case of death."

"I forget nothing, dearie. I know that some of the fellows fainted while undergoing the examination; I know that you are never free to walk, ride, or enjoy life; and I know, too, that a man who wants to prepare himself for hardship and danger must learn to endure it in his youth. Besides, I can resign before I am very old, after doing my country full service. I have thought it all over, weighed everything, and counted the cost long before I said one word to you, because I wanted to be sure of myself. If I fail, you will not be ashamed of me?"

"No; oh, no," said Bessie.

In her secret heart she almost wished he might; for the past years had been precious to her. Dick was growing more and more into her life; and Rosie's love for him was part of herself.

Tom felt that fate had dealt unkindly with him; and his one hope was that the boy might be surpassed at the examination, and the dream be forever given up.

Tom remembered the time when he had suffered from the "West Point fever"; and his recovery was rapid.

Dick did not fail. On the contrary, he came out with flying colors, as we have seen; and in a few short weeks he must leave home. Friends said he would never endure the discipline; but Tom remembered the little hands which held the flying horses; and he knew that once undertaken, nothing save absolute illness could deter his boy.

Tom was nearly ill. He saw Bessie going about making purchases, marking linen, and consulting with Dick concerning the supplies required; and he saw Dick radiant, happy; and almost rejoiced to leave his beautiful home. Tom could not talk about it without finding himself stirred to the depths. He knew it was a bitter trial to his wife, and yet she went on sweetly, cheerfully, prayerfully.

"I suppose," she said one day when Tom had given utterance to some bitter remark, "I suppose we must have military leaders while society is constructed as it now is, and, although war and bloodshed conflict with all our peace-principles, we know that trained commanders avoid bloodshed as much as possible, and there have been and will continue to be good and brave soldiers who are needed in the world's work."

"I wish our boy had chosen something else, — anything else," said Tom.

"It must be given him to do," said Bessie, "and I dare not oppose him."

It was astonishing to see the enthusiasm of Mr. Scrimmager during this time of preparation. He seemed to revel in it, told Dick he was proud of him, repeated stories of army life, found books of heroes for the boy to read, and told Tom that good metal was only found by smelting.

"I tell you he will come out all right," said the old man, as he rubbed his thin hands together. "Wait and see."

Tom and Bessie went to West Point, and examined every corner and turn from the landing to the old fort. They met the instructors, visited in their families, and saw the awkward plebes trying to drill.

The visit did not lessen Dick's hardships, but it gave them something to think of, and when the boy wrote home and described everything in or around the grounds the parents saw the picture distinctly.

Bessie never could understand why the rooms should be so bare and shabby; why every home picture and home-like adornment should be forbidden, and a chair out of line be sufficient cause for punishment. She found many things to change, many which she knew would be changed if mothers and sisters could use their influence.

"I think," said she to Tom's mother, "that our government makes a sad mistake in its schools. While our college boys indulge themselves in needless extravagance, our young officers are denied simple comforts."

"I wish that a few politicians could be shut up in those dismal rooms for even six months," said Mr.

Scrimmager, with unusual spirit. "I had a brother there, you remember, breveted for bravery in Mexico. Well, these rooms were just as barren, cheerless, and gloomy as they are to-day. When the poor fellow first entered he hung his mother's picture opposite his bed, just where it had hung at home, and he was punished for it, — punished as if he had committed sin, — and once again, when he in his ignorance of domestic duties neglected to sweep under his wardrobe, he was reported, for a man is never excused for anything there."

"And yet you encouraged Dick," said Tom, wrathfully.

"Because it was the boy's bent, and I have always found that a man or boy works best when his heart was in his work."

"I was one of the board of visitors at one time," said Judge Livingston, "and I was determined to see the inside workings, as my nephew was a cadet, and now, whenever I hear people talking about the snobs and aristocrats and government pets, I feel like giving them a taste of it. What college youth of wealth and standing performs such menial duties as making beds, sweeping rooms, attending to toilets, cleaning gloves, and all without let or hindrance, year in and year out, while engaged in the severest mental drill? When I see a man nowadays wearing the buttons and gold lace, I say to myself, you have earned by privation, discipline, obedience, and faithful service, all the fine clothes and honor Uncle Sam can bestow, and besides this, you have almost renounced family

and home ties. It is a question of the survival of the fittest; only a plucky man can complete the course, only a manly man do himself and friends credit in it, and if the people better understood these things as we who know the true inwardness do understand it, we should hear less foolish talk about the officers who are always ready to ignore self and obey the call of their country."

The judge was eloquent, being intelligent.

CHAPTER XLV.

MOTHERS COUNT.

A BOY like Dick Sylvester would not complain unnessarily, if at all, for he had his heart's desire, and was, as he supposed, on the high road to glory.

Now, glory is not easily won, and Dick knew it, even before he sat by his barrack window, overlooking the yard.

He had not been fortunate enough to secure a room with an outlook upon the parade ground, but fortune smiled on him concerning his room-mate, who was a tall New England boy of good family and manly ideas.

"I say, Sylvester, let's fix up the shanty; a man can study better for something bright about him."

"All right," responded Dick, with a half sigh as he thought of three rooms all his own. He inherited his mother's cheerful spirit, and was not easily cast down.

The youths had purchased the usual supplies, and at once began housekeeping on a very limited and rather uncomfortable scale.

The dingy floor, the curtainless windows, the bare wooden table, the stiff, uncomfortable chairs, refused to become luxurious.

"It's a deal tougher on you than on me, Sylvester," said Preston, with a laugh; "you see I am older, and camp-life has seasoned me a little. Iron bedsteads savor of prison-life."

"Couldn't we introduce a few comforts?" asked Dick.

"Never — iron regulation, you know; besides, the poorest boy in the land is just as good in Uncle Sam's sight as the son of a millionnaire."

"Equality and justice," said Dick. "Old Skim is forever talking about that; but even he would not sleep on an Anchorite's bed."

"Look forward, not back," said Preston; "we are in for a four years' siege, my boy, and if we are not hazed out of existence, I am bound to stand what other men have stood."

"And so am I; if we growl to each other, the good people at home will be spared."

The first night the plebes slept in peace, or rather tried to sleep, for the strange surroundings, the fear of doing or not doing right, and the memory of the rules and regulations to be learned, rendered the occupants of both beds uneasy.

By day their duties kept them fully occupied, and at night the poor plebes were unmercifully treated by those who, having suffered themselves, were less merciful than became those bearing the honored title of gentleman.

Hazing in all its forms is brutal, and more have been permanently injured thereby than any record will accurately report.

Dick and Preston endured their full share, and won some praise from their persecutors for their independent bearing.

At night each cadet went to his hard bed, weary and worn with the daily service, and, although many grew pale and some hollow-eyed, not one would openly complain.

Let us rejoice that the vile persecution called hazing, which ignores all established rules of etiquette and decency, is at last receiving from the public and press the condemnation it deserves. Men are now living who can tell tales of horror concerning the treatment of strangers in a strange land, of homesick and heartsick boys struggling with new duties, and yet enduring physical and mental torture. If this is the result of education, let us have fewer professors, and more possessors of the Divine Spirit, which helps rather than hinders.

It was well for Tom Sylvester that he did not know all concerning Dick's early days at the Academy; well for Bessie's peace of mind that the boy wrote cheerfully, detailing the work of each hour. To Rosie, his sweet little sister, whose peculiarly loving letters were like balm to Dick, the boy poured out his heart unconsciously but faithfully.

When Dick received demerits for a misplaced chair or untidy gloves, Rosie was sure to hear the story, told in a droll manner, which made her not only think of him more frequently, but compelled her to remember her own careless habits.

Sometimes Dick was tired, and his eyes ached, the lights not being the best in the world; sometimes he thought it would seem delightful to walk once more on carpeted floors, and enter a room full of ladies.

"It may be best to keep a fellow or a lot of fellows shut up here without the society of good women," wrote Dick. "Perhaps Uncle Sam knows best; but I would give my watch grandma presented to me on leaving, just to sit down in the drawing-room or library at home, and hear you and grandma and Aunt Mary talk over the evening paper. Why, we are as ignorant of all that goes on outside as a lot of heathens. When we get a paper, it goes the rounds until it is worn to shreds."

When Tom read this, he muttered a few words about monks, and wished something could be done to make the government see that complete isolation is not conducive to strength.

The hard grind of the first year, always the hardest to every schoolboy, but especially so in the army or navy, came at last to an end.

Christmas was hardly Christmas without Dick, although Tom himself went up the Hudson and contrived to carry the boys in Dick's class a few homelike and home-made provisions.

He was not surprised to find the boy taller, broader, manlier.

"Pretty hard discipline, is it not?" said Tom, when the boy had at last succeeded in getting permission to spend a few hours with his father.

Dick nodded.

"Ready to resign?" asked Tom.

"No, sir; never. I will make my mark, or die trying."

Things were growing easier. The second year some of the officers' wives invited Dick to their homes, where music, familiar chat, and a home-table made the earth seem a perfect paradise. Then the routine became less irksome; there was something to write home about,—something besides Kosciusko's monument, "Flirtation walk," dress parade, and some distinguished visitors.

To be sure, the river was always grand and beautiful, and the walks fine in good weather; but man is an impulsive animal, and avoids "bounds" and "limits."

In the officers' homes, Dick was once more a wide-awake, healthy, happy youth, ready to speak his thoughts, and equally ready to listen to others.

"The trouble is," said the chaplain's wife, one evening, "that you boys leave home just when you most need mothering and home influence. I dare not transgress, or so much as think a non-regulation thought; but I should like to mother you all just a little, for the sake of your own mothers, and your own souls,—every soul needs it."

Who could ever forget that motherly kindness! Who could ever wipe from the book of memory the unfailing goodness, sympathy, counsel, and home-warmth given to these hungry youth by this sweet mother in Israel!

Many a bearded man remembers her; and in his heart he blesses her for the light shed on his path of duty.

Thus wrote Dick:—

"I cannot tell you all the chaplain's wife is to us. Other ladies are kind and courteous; but she is our guide, philosopher, and friend. We tell her all our troubles, and she sends us back to our quarters at peace with the world; while she scolds us well for any imprudence. I was sick last week—so sick that the soreness in my throat made the tears come if I tried to speak; and just as I was thinking how wretched the whole world was, and how I hated everything, she came in, and made the sun shine again. I tell you, mothers count."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE FITNESS OF TIME.

MOTHERS counted indeed; so Bessie found when Dick came home on "second class leave," and told little by little the story of his life at West Point.

Her mother's heart rebelled against petty exactions and restrictions which too often tempt the student to deceive; but she rejoiced, also, that Dick's love of truth led him to accept punishment for any transgression in the right spirit. In her letters she sent him bits of wisdom, culled from the best writers, and these were shared not only by Preston but with other congenial members of the class.

If any one believes that absence and isolation can spoil a really fine nature, and render it insensible to home love and family ties, let him stand near while the mail is delivered at the Academy on some holiday. Precious letters to be shared with the less fortunate, pictures to be hovered over and praised, messages to raise a laugh which might echo over the grounds and find an answer across the Hudson.

Ah, me! if fathers and mothers only knew the power of home letters, no weariness would cause

them to withhold the sending, no effort would be too great for the absent ones. The boys who are always in scrapes and misfortune are generally the unfortunate ones who receive a weekly or monthly admonition from home and are not held fast with oft-repeated love and counsel.

"I couldn't be very fast if I tried," said Dick one day, when one of his classmates had rated him for not joining a runaway party. "You see I have plenty of pluck to go on and get into mischief, and feel wonderfully tempted sometimes, but a letter from home is sure to assist me, and I wouldn't for my right hand give little mother cause to blush for me, or have Rosie think me less than a hero."

Dick's classmate eyed him sternly for a moment, and then said:—

"What is a fellow to do without a little mother and sister, and with a governor who says, 'Walk straight, or I'll disown you'?"

"I don't know," said Dick, "I have so many to care, you see; but I will read you some of my mother's letters, Forbes, and perhaps you will understand; she says that to honor, love, and be just to our neighbor is to be religious, and it seems to me that we can neither honor nor be just when we disobey those in authority over us."

"Not when they swear at you like old B——?"

"He might teach us a lesson of patience and self-control; I am sure I need it," said Dick, honestly.

"Perhaps so," said Forbes; "but I envy you your even temper."

"Don't," said Dick, with a laugh; "I am a regular firebrand,—ask Preston if I am not; but here is a bit my mother sent me from a book she was reading: 'Whoever does the thing he is told to do, the thing, that is, that has a plain ought in it, will soon be satisfied that there is one who will not forget to tell him what must be done as soon as he is fit to do it.'"

Forbes took out his pocket-book and wrote down the words.

"Thank you, Sylvester," he said; "it won't hurt to have a thing of that sort in one's wallet; especially when baser coin is wanting. I quite envy you your mother."

Dick was conscience-stricken for a moment; here was a young man hungry for the very love and tenderness, the comradeship and counsel, he had taken for granted. He recalled many instances of disrespect, of perverseness, and downright wilfulness which must have tried her sorely.

Dick could even remember the wistful sad eyes which reproached him, and, he resolved at once to be worthy of her love, and not only that, he would tell her so.

After that he saw Forbes frequently, and the warm-hearted Southerner became the devoted friend of the Yankee boy he had sneered at.

Dick soon had an opportunity to show his real feeling towards his mother. He had been reading a

book she had sent him, and one passage was constantly in his mind: —

"It is not the betrayal of feeling, but the avoidance of duty, which constitutes weakness."

How little we know concerning the fitness of time, how ignorant we are of the good word or deed which goes from us to bless some soul in its hour of need. If this truth could be remembered, many a bitter word would remain unspoken — many a caustic line unwritten.

Dick Sylvester, sitting in his dismal room during "meditation hour" one gloomy Sunday, wrote as follows to his mother: —

"My Dearest Mother, — Forbes has just been in, and we have been having a little talk, chiefly about home and friends. I told you about him, you will remember. He is from South Carolina, and motherless. While he was talking of his dead mother, I was constantly thinking of you; of your love and patience and never-ending efforts for my comfort and happiness. There is plenty of time to think of it here; plenty of trials to make your forbearance precious. How I used to torture you with my pranks! how weary you with my temper! Dear little mother, I wonder that you can ever forgive me; and I do not know how I am ever to repay you. It must be that mothers are more Godlike in their forgiveness than other people. Well, dear, I will reward you feebly by getting the very best marks

I can; and if I do not get within the glorious circle of the 'first five,' put it down to natural stupidity. It will be hard work, with older fellows against me. First five, or at the foot, I shall always be, in the world or out of it.

"Your loving, grateful son,

"DICK."

Could any mother read such a letter without a prayer of thanksgiving on her lips, and tears of joy in her eyes? Blessed, unknown fitness of time!

It reached Bessie just as she turned away from her father's still, calm face. His summons came suddenly; but the end was peace; and, as the beloved daughter looked for the last time on the dear father's face, the gloom of sorrow was pierced by this ray of filial love, sent by her own child.

The early hours of anxious pain, the struggles with youthful will and an impetuous nature, seemed very trivial now, with the mystery of death beside her; and the manly words of one whose life was just beginning to unfold pressed close to her heart.

"If boys only knew," she said to Tom, "if they could only understand how a word of praise from them helps their ever-anxious mothers, I think they would be less slow to speak them, and manly enough to say, 'I have sinned.' Dick's letter has repaid me for all sleepless nights, all anxious days, all wretched hours of his childhood. He has shown himself true, in boldly speaking the truth he felt."

"Bessie," said Tom, "don't you think it would be rather strange if my disappointment about Dick's going into the army should turn out to be his best discipline?"

"Nothing is strange when Heaven directs," answered Bessie; and Tom saw her press her boy's letter to her lips.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ORDERS.

At last the four years' course was ended; and the graduating ball was about to take place.

Hundreds of visitors crowded the hotels, carriages went to and fro, telegrams were sent and received, and all was bustle and excitement. The fair young belle, busy over her toilet for the occasion, could not understand the feelings of mingled sadness and pleasure which troubled her stalwart host of the evening.

She was fortunate in obtaining an invitation where so many had failed, — pleased with the pomp, the music, the gay crowds, and herself. But the young cadet who requested her presence well knew that this play-spell was only won after hard labor, and was sure to be followed by severer duties.

Dick was eager and radiant. All he loved best were about him — father, mother, Rosie, Judge and Mrs. Livingston, and even dear old Skim, whose fondness for military manœuvres would cease only with his life.

"I tell you, Sylvester," said General Harding to Tom, as they stood together on the steps at Coz-

zens', "I tell you a college man cannot understand this thing; I speak from experience; you take your diploma after a very charming life in college, where, unless you are very poor, you have enjoyed all social delights, and home-life as well; but these boys of ours have been virtually shut up at hard service for four years; they are kept together as one family by the strictest rules. Every honor is won with extreme difficulty, every hour of existence mapped out for you by others, the routine becomes monotonous, the restraint wearisome, and the same anxiety pervades all. When the parting comes, each one knows that danger on land or at sea is his portion, if he has been educated in a government school; and his severe training has led him to ignore trifles, to obey orders, and in all things to consider duty paramount. The boy who graduates in this place pays well for all he receives, and no wonder the poor fellows are sad at parting, while they make a pretence of unusual gayety."

"I saw my boy and his room-mate stealing away by themselves for a quiet chat," said Tom. "They have never been separated since they entered."

"Poor fellows! and the Lord only knows whether they will ever meet again. You cannot understand it. Sylvester, this bond of attachment only ends with life."

While the gentlemen were talking, Dick and Preston were seated on the river bank, looking grave and thoughtful.

"If anything happens, and we never meet again," said Preston —

"We shall," said Dick, interrupting; "why, Sep, you are to marry little Rosie, you know, and we will all take the Continent for your wedding trip."

Preston tried to smile.

"Of course we will," added Dick. "I gave my furnishings to that poor devil of a plebe who walked all the way from Ohio, and I told him that I wished he might have as good a room-mate as I had."

"We haven't quarrelled very much, have we?" asked Preston.

"Not oftener than once a week," said Dick, laughing. "Preston, my boy, you are my senior; the next time we chat together you will wear a star on your shoulders. You are bound to be in the direct line for promotion; it is your luck."

"Thanks for your kindly prophecy, chummie; no one knows better than ourselves that honors are hard-won."

So they parted, each turning his head away to hide the feeling which did his heart credit, each pressing the hand he held with more than brotherly love.

Before Tom and Bessie fully realized that Dick was once more under their roof, before he had responded to his numerous invitations to lunch, to dine, to dance, to yacht, to travel, the summons came.

"Orders from the Department," said Dick, one morning as he sought his mother in her own room.

"Orders from the Department, and where do you think I am going?"

"Wherever duty calls," said Bessie, trying to hide a little tremor which would surge from heart to lip.

"To the outermost outpost, — to Fort Orme, where the Indians are amusing themselves with cutting up settlers; and dear old Sep Preston has been ordered to New Mexico."

Then there was hurrying to and fro, packing, selecting, purchasing; grandma tried to take a few necessary stitches, but found her glasses misty.

Bessie went steadily on doing all that was required. Dick was gay, jubilant, and joyous; partly because his work was given him to do, partly for the sake of the sweet-faced mother, who grew dearer and dearer as he thought of leaving her.

The young man who is trained to think of death daily, seldom fears it, however much his friends fear for him, and although Dick knew that danger was before him, he resolutely determined to leave the sweetest, pleasantest memories behind, to make his home-leaving, if possible, less bitter to those who loved him so well.

Dick went to town and gave his orders to his father, who was quite absorbed in some business matters. When he opened the official document, Tom Sylvester nearly groaned aloud. It was hard to bear, — his Dick, his only son, a target for the treacherous Indians.

"I will give you ten thousand dollars to resign," said Tom as he handed the orders to Skim, the faithful, who shared all family tidings.

"Twice that would not tempt me, sir; five years hence we may think of it; now it would be cowardly to refuse the service for which I am fitted."

"You needn't have any feeling of pride about the government giving you your education," said Tom; "some of these idiots about here talk that sort of nonsense."

"Not for a moment," said Dick, "I have served faithfully my allotted time and have been paid for my services, as every student is at our government institutions. He is paid for his daily work as any other man is paid, and when it is well done the government has the first claim to his service, provided there is need of it. In this case, Uncle Sam needs me and I must go."

"And you are quite right," said Skim, emphatically.

"What does your mother say?" asked Tom.

"She said I would go where duty called me," answered Dick. "She knew it must come sooner or later, sir."

"They might give you time to rest," said Tom, bitterly.

"The Indians are troubling the settlers, sir, and more troops are needed. The poor settlers need rest."

Poor Tom! it was very hard to bear, and all the more so that he had never been quite reconciled to Dick's career.

"I don't know, boy, what will become of you," he said to Dick as they drove out home together.

His tone was half fretful, half endearing.

"I don't mean to be selfish, but we have had a pretty hard time getting you up to manhood, and I should feel a deal happier if you would settle down here near your family; I am a strong believer in old family ties."

"Time enough for that, father, you are still so young, and I little better than a boy; give me time, and I may yet be glad to take old Skim's place when the good soul is pensioned. I know you will pension him in time, for my sake."

It seemed to Tom Sylvester almost wicked for his family to joke and laugh over Dick's journey.

Bessie was trying to keep up for the boy's sake; Rosie was feebly following her mother's example, and Grandma Livingston diligently packed and folded without talking.

Grandma Winthrop sent a long letter, filled with tender pleas, for the boy to throw up his commission and come to her; they would travel in Europe for a year or two, and all she had she would gladly share with him.

"It seems to me I must fight this out alone," said Dick, as he read his grandmother's letter.

"No, dear," said Bessie, quietly; "it is duty, and I am with you."

So Dick was comforted, and in three days after wrote from Washington:

"We leave to-night; two companies under Major Downie: shall push forward rapidly."

"We shall never see him again," said Tom.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"FORT ORME ATTACKED."

THE autumn fled away, and the snow lay thick in and around Fort Orme. There had been a few trifling skirmishes but no serious outbreak since the garrison was re-enforced, so wrote Dick, telling all the daily life of the military family shut up in a hostile region.

The disagreeable portions were not reported for the home readers, but Bessie read between the lines, and well knew that a brave spirit pervaded all, and led the members of the garrison to hope and hope again.

"We are sheltering so many families inside," wrote Dick, "that our quarters are somewhat crowded. The poor souls are driven from their homes, their dwellings and barns burned, their crops destroyed, and now, with a bitter winter upon them, we must care for them. The only fear is that our supplies may fall short, and the red tape of our supply department does not provide for sudden emergencies. I want to go out and forage, but the colonel lost several men that way, and the Indians are too near for safety. If they get starved out, they will attack us

before spring. Meantime, we are very careful of our provisions, and may yet be put on half-rations. I wish you could see a German woman we have here; her husband was killed by the Indians, although he had fed and befriended them for five years. She, poor thing, crept through the woods, with two small children, and was led to our garrison by her boy of twelve, who fortunately knew the way. They lived on roots, and her poor fingers are in a frightful condition from digging them out from under the snow. The worst thing about the rascals is their treachery. A Maine lumberman, who has been in business here for several years, says he will not trust one of them, although he has lived with them and employed them as guides. His partner was murdered by two Indians, to whom he had been very generous. They demanded some tobacco one day, and he refused them, as he did not have any, whereupon they murdered him on the spot. We have three Christian Indians in our garrison, who are very useful in various ways; our colonel trusts them implicitly, but the lumberman advises him to be cautious. We have also two missionaries, and a young lady teacher, who were all brought in safely by a Christian Indian. I dare say we shall be compelled to cope with the noble red man before long."

"Two sides to every question," said Tom, as he read this; "but I wish our boy was well out of it. A few Christian Indians will not compensate for the three hundred innocent settlers who were butchered."

Again the weeks wore away, until one April morning, when Tom heard a newsboy cry: —

"Fort Orme attacked by Indians — Great loss of life — Bravery of a Massachusetts officer."

Tom sprang to his feet; before he could reach the street below, Skim had a paper in his hand, which he merely glanced at and handed to Tom.

The newsboy had not exaggerated. It was all there, and more; brief enough at the best, but terrible to Tom.

"I will go out home at once," he said to Skim. "Bessie might hear some flying rumor."

"I will go with you," said Skim, quietly.

The old man knew that sudden sorrow must not feed upon itself.

Bessie had already heard the tidings, and her face wore the look which Tom remembered so well, the look it had worn in those early days while the boy was hovering between life and death.

"Is this the very latest?" she asked.

"Yes," said Tom, nervously; "there is no chance of getting more from such an outlandish place."

"You see how the news reached St. Paul?" said Skim.

"No; how was it?"

"A little German boy who found the attacking Indians were in great force escaped from the garrison, seized an Indian pony, rode post-haste to the nearest settlement, took another horse and pushed on to St. Paul, where his horse fell, and he could only tell the tale in gasps."

"It must be the little fellow Dick told us of," said Tom; "and he ought to be canonized."

About noon another despatch came.

"Colonel Lester was severely wounded early in the engagement; and Major Downie took command. The women inside the garrison obeyed orders like veterans. Later, Major Downie was instantly killed, after a sharp conflict with the savages; and the command was then given to Lieutenant Sylvester, whose pluck and strategy won applause even from his wounded comrades. The garrison suffered for bandages and hospital supplies; and the young German reports that provisions are short. The citizens of St. Paul and other cities in the Northwest immediately forwarded ample supplies, under the charge of an old Indian trader, and two volunteer surgeons."

Then came days of waiting — anxious days, when the Western papers near the scene of horror filled column after column with added intelligence concerning the "boldest and most brutal warfare ever recorded."

The Eastern press contented itself with brief despatches; while Eastern philosophers wrote letters to the papers, recommending this policy or that.

It is comparatively easy to fight battles while seated in one's own library; but such encounters bear as much resemblance to the real battle as Cooper's Indian does to the greasy, treacherous, idle savage of the far Northwest. His portrait must be painted by the hand of an actual settler; his virtues,

— for some possess virtues, — as we have shown, will be truly pictured by those who have lived among them or on the frontier.

When the smoke of battle cleared away, when the savages knew that the Great Father at Washington had not left his troops to starve or be annihilated, then Dick wrote home, — not with his usual vigor, for the little school teacher wrote for him.

"My right hand was hurt a little," he said; "and I have not yet learned to use the left; but Miss Gleason kindly acts as my amanuensis. During the engagement, she acted as assistant gunner, and — " (Here something was erased; evidently the amanuensis refused to write her own history.) "It was a bitter fight, — a cruel butchery. Indians fight like the savages they are; and poor Major Downie was literally cut to pieces. We triumphed at last; but our garrison was crowded with the wounded, dead, and dying. Colonel Lester is improving rapidly, and will soon be up again, we hope. Every man, woman, and child aided in the defence; and if the history of Fort Orme is ever fully written, their names must be placed on the roll of honor. When I am an accomplished left-hand writer, I will send you further news; meantime, you will enjoy Miss Gleason's journal, which she kindly loans me for you."

How the family devoured every word! how friends praised without stint! and the local press claimed Dick for a hero.

Bessie said little; but her heart throbbed quickly

when she thought of the major's mother. I think she never quite knew how anxious she was, or how grateful, until the major's young wife answered her kind letter, with tear-drops on every page and a heart-break in each word.

Tom was more than ever determined to wean his boy from such hazardous service; and his fatherly pride, when old officers assured him that his boy would be brevetted for bravery, did not dissipate his resolution.

The summer fled, and Dick still wrote cheerful letters, — always with his left hand, Bessie knew, although she did not mention it to Tom.

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CHAPTER XLIX.

TRIUMPH.

BESSIE was sitting quietly in her sewing-room one morning, reading aloud to her mother and Rosie, when she heard a quick step on the stair, and soon, before she could rise to do so, some one opened the door, some one tall and slender, with a fierce mustache and an empty coat-sleeve.

With a wild, glad cry Bessie threw her arms about him, but she could not speak.

"Oh, Dick, Dick, dear brother Dick, I am so glad!" exclaimed Rosie; "but you never told us this."

As she spoke the young girl touched the empty sleeve reverently, and Bessie pressed it to her lips.

"It was not wise to mention it," said Dick, as he led his mother to a chair, and greeted Grandma Winthrop; "it might have made you unhappy, and father would be sure to suffer."

"Your right one, too," said grandma, with a sigh.

"Oh, it is all right now," said Dick, with his old-time spirit. "I might have been here on leave, but I waited until things were in better shape out there. Two years since I left you, little mother."

"Two centuries," said Mrs. Winthrop. "It has been a dreary time."

"Well, we will make up for it now. This stump has at last healed, and, if nothing happens, grandma, I will soon sport a patent arm which will not hurt me if the red-skins cut and hack it. Don't I write fairly well for a left-hander? Thanks to you, little mother, who insisted on training both sides of my body; it was awkward at first, but now I do very well."

Dick was sitting now where he had been so long ago after his adventure with the horses, and something in his tone and manner reminded Bessie of the poor little hands and the bleeding knees. The same spirit ruled the man.

Grandma grieved over the missing arm, but Bessie rejoiced in her boy. He was hers still, maimed or suffering; hers all the more because he had suffered and must go on through life with the mark of that terrible night ever present with him.

Whatever Dick Sylvester thought or felt, no one knew save his Maker and his mother; he had performed his duty, and that was all.

Tom laughed and cried by turns when he saw him, and then shut himself in his room for a season. He was neither weak nor cowardly, but the shock was severe. Often during his college days he had passed men with empty sleeves, and always with a shudder of pity, and once, when an accident had rendered his own useless for a few weeks, he grew impatient, and wondered how any man could desire to live when thus afflicted. And now here was his own boy — his

idolized and only son — fettered and disfigured in his youth, needlessly, Tom said, cruelly, he was sure. It was hard for a proud man to bear, but harder for Dick.

For some weeks Tom avoided looking at his boy when he held his paper, or at table, lest Dick might feel sensitive about it, but, thanks to the All-wise One, even painful things grow softer and less painful as we endure them.

So Tom grew accustomed to the slight awkwardness, and showed his kindness in securing for his boy the perfection of art to replace the lost member.

Little by little Tom came to understand Bessie's view of the case, which Dick shared, and he saw that trial had developed the young man's character as no prosperity could have done.

"Mother," said Dick one day, "do you remember the workmen who fitted up the stable when I was a little chap?"

"I do," said Bessie; "I remember one who gave me his ideas concerning corporal punishment, or rather we exchanged them; he prophesied a wicked career for you, my son."

"That is the one; well, would you believe it, his oldest boy was one of our carpenters at Orme, and the story came out after I was hurt. You see, the men were forbidden to write home full particulars, as it would not answer to let the enemy know our weakness, and the crafty rascals were sure to find out. Then I was anxious to keep my injury out of

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The news quickly spread that Lieutenant Sylvester was at home, and Dick was in danger of being lionized. Jake came down from the farm to see him, and Dave, who dared not write to so grand a gentleman, sent him a roast pig of his own raising, which the widow Lecky cooked, seasoning it with a thousand "bless hims," and basting it almost literally with her tears.

Judge Livingston and his wife urged him to remain at home, and the young maidens petted him as much as one so manly would permit.

Dick's heart was touched with all the kindness offered, but he was neither vain nor selfish. A few

sharp conflicts with life and death destroy both vanity and selfishness, and Dick had been nearer the Border Land than his parents knew. He was worn and thin still; he needed rest and change: so it was decided that he should take a well earned holiday and go abroad with his family.

Just before they left, Mrs. Welsh came with Bob to see him, and the good woman's joyous greeting cheered the young soldier quite as much as the flattering words of society belles.

"Only to think of it, Mr. Dick, and you all safe once more, after being cut up by those painted savages! I sez to Bob, 'You needn't tell me that he won't see us if we go up, for I never will believe that a dozen years could make him anything but kind-hearted, and I am sure it would do my eyes good to see him, after crying them sore with reading about the savage creatures.' So here we are: Bob he works in a printing office, and his pay was raised last month, and the little girl is in a shoe-shop, and things are easier now; they've been easier ever since you brought the baby up here, Mr. Dick."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mrs. Welsh," said Dick; "very glad. You deserve prosperity."

"And so do you, sir, and henceforth when I hear any one telling about this boy or that boy how he does, or how he doesn't do, so long as he is not full of cruelty and wickedness, why, I'll just think of you, sir, and how you was miscalled and belied, and none of them knowing the great heart of you but them as

loved you best. I am as proud of you as if you was president, and the mayor himself couldn't say more."

Mrs. Welsh went her way, and the young soldier laid his brown shapely head on his mother's shoulder, saying, —

"How is it with you, little one; are you just a little proud of your dreadful boy?"

And Bessie's answer was a silent caress.

THE END.

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Judge Livingston and his wife urged him to remain at home, and the young maidens petted him as much as one so manly would permit.

Dick's heart was touched with all the kindness offered, but he was neither vain nor selfish. A few

sharp conflicts with life and death destroy both vanity and selfishness, and Dick had been nearer the Border Land than his parents knew. He was worn and thin still; he needed rest and change: so it was decided that he should take a well earned holiday and go abroad with his family.

Just before they left, Mrs. Welsh came with Bob to see him, and the good woman's joyous greeting cheered the young soldier quite as much as the flattering words of society belles.

"Only to think of it, Mr. Dick, and you all safe once more, after being cut up by those painted savages! I sez to Bob, 'You needn't tell me that he won't see us if we go up, for I never will believe that a dozen years could make him anything but kind-hearted, and I am sure it would do my eyes good to see him, after crying them sore with reading about the savage creatures.' So here we are: Bob he works in a printing office, and his pay was raised last month, and the little girl is in a shoe-shop, and things are easier now; they've been easier ever since you brought the baby up here, Mr. Dick."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mrs. Welsh," said Dick; "very glad. You deserve prosperity."

"And so do you, sir, and henceforth when I hear any one telling about this boy or that boy how he does, or how he doesn't do, so long as he is not full of cruelty and wickedness, why, I'll just think of you, sir, and how you was miscalled and belied, and none of them knowing the great heart of you but them as